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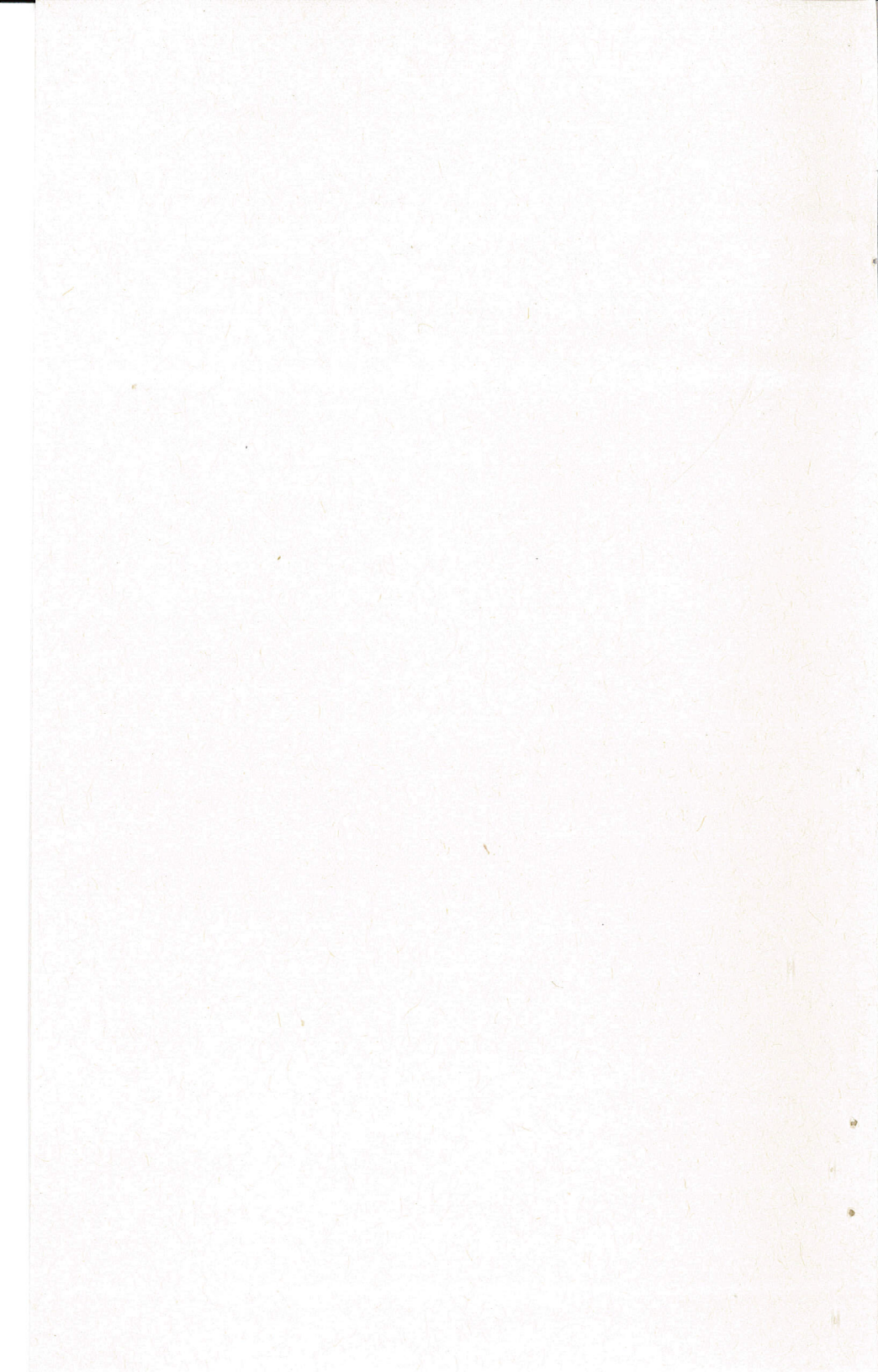
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Edition *Patterns* 2002 44th

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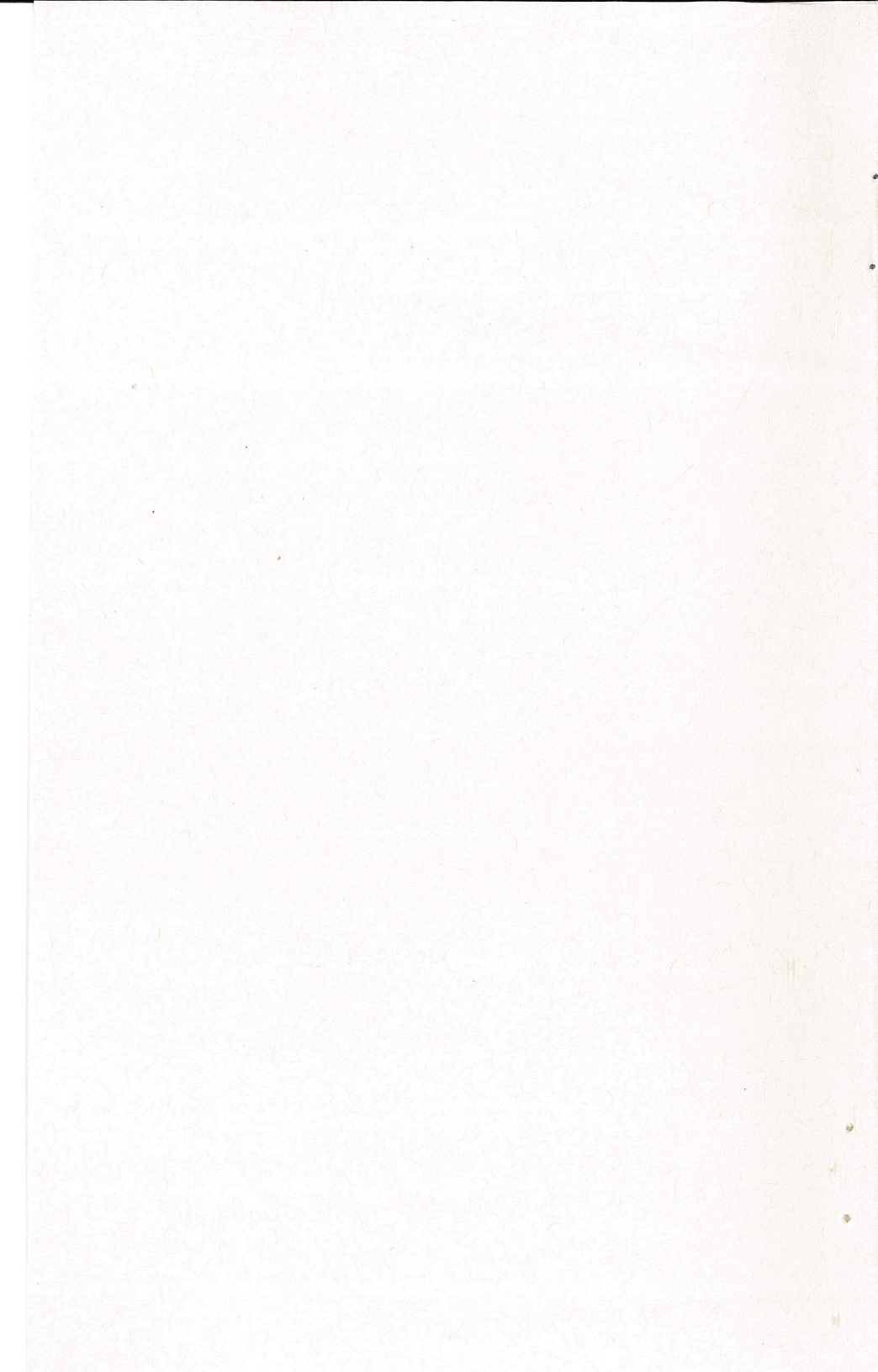
44th EDITION

PATTERNS

2002

ST. CLAIR COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Port Huron, Michigan



PREFACE

NOW THAT WE'RE IN THE 21ST CENTURY, we tend to see our words more and more in the tentative virtual existence of cyberspace. There on our glowing monitors we share thoughts via email, and these bits of ourselves share in the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't quality of everything on the web. Everything is erasable at the touch of a delete key.

For this reason it is refreshing to hold in one's hands an emphatically *there* volume like this edition of *Patterns*. And matching the tactile and visual aesthetic of this publication is the down to earth quality of its literary contents. When asked what stood out in this year's offerings, our judges noted that these stories, essays and poems offer a very concrete, down to earth vision of life as it is lived by emphatically real people. Turn these pages and you will find little of the ivory tower or of fantasy writing; instead you'll be invited to briefly enter the lives and minds of writers in tune with the here and now.

AWARDS

RICHARD COLWELL AND BLANCHE REDMAN AWARDS 1ST AND 2ND PLACE WRITING AWARDS

YOU MAY THINK I'M FEIGNING GRACIOUSNESS when I say that choosing stories and poems from this fine group has been difficult, but I'm not. This has been hard. I believe the folks at St. Clair County Community College have loads of writing talent, and for me to say that one person's writing is more deserving of praise than another's, this saddens me because writing over the course of a lifetime is not dependent on winning a prize once but on continuing to write, to love writing, to believe in writing, for years and years. To those writers whose work I did not pick, allow me to say that my selection is based on my personal feeling at this point in my life, which is to say it's very possible that another judge could easily have made other selections.

I would like to give the Richard J. Colwell Award to the story "Slipping." This story is a fine piece of work, reminiscent of Lorrie Moore's stories, and its lyrical prose suggests a state of longing and heartache that I find incredibly moving. Moreover, reading "Slipping" is a process akin to peeling an onion, wherein the reader starts at one point of sadness and through a progression of revelations ends up at a deeper point.

For first place in the short story category, I have selected "Clandestine," an oddly poignant rendering of a drug deal that produces the effect on me of looking over my shoulder and worrying about getting arrested. To me, when a story can do this, when it can make the reader nervous, it's a success in every way.

The second place story is "Tattoos," the rough-edged tale of Larry and Barbara, who remind me of any number of people I've known over the years. With fine internal monologue and expertly realistic dialogue, "Tattoos" is the kind of story that makes you think about love and what you lose when you're in it.

The Blanche Redman Award will go to the masterful poem "Brother," which I find to be bone-chilling and remarkably pol-

ished. What stands out in this poem is the fine use of language and the keen control of the poetic line, yet this linguistic facility does not obscure, as in weaker poems it often does, the subject matter, which in this case is the eternal rivalry between siblings.

The first place poem goes to the smartly titled "What?" This poem brings to mind Philip Levine's poems on work, yet it goes even deeper into the sorrow and misery of toiling at the same job, without respite, for a life. This poem makes me want to take a vacation, which in my opinion means it's done its job.

The second place poem will be "Midnight's to Home," which deploys the interesting poetic technique of second-person point of view and as a consequence creates a working-class noir feel, a desperation that, happily, resolves itself with a friendly cat.

In all these are wonderful pieces of writing, and I can't wait to see them in print. *Mike Magnuson*

Working-class novelist Mike Magnuson is the author of *The Right Man for the Job*, *The Fire Gospels*, and *Lummox: The Evolution of a Man*. His novels have been described as intense, meticulous, disturbing, hilarious, and as being singularly Wisconsin-gothic and pretty much kickass. His miscellaneous writing has appeared in *Esquire*, *Writer's Digest*, *Fiction Writer*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, and other publications, and he has recently gone into the studio and recorded a spoken word CD entitled *Loud!* He was born in 1963 in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, was raised in Menomonee Falls, and spent a good deal of his twenties going to college and hanging around in taverns and working in a plastics factory in the west-central Wisconsin city of Eau Claire. He has also lived in Ohio, Minnesota, Florida, and Illinois, where he currently lives. He earns his daily bread teaching in the Creative Writing Program at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale.

www.lummox.org

ELEANOR B. MATHEWS WRITING AWARD

"On the evening bus, the tired, pinched faces of young file clerks and elderly secretaries tell us more than we care to know." —

Studs Terkel, This Working Life

Some smile at the TV when they see Fred Flintstone gleefully sliding off the tail of a brontosaurus, or Dick Van Dyke somersaulting over furniture at the end of the workday. Others love the sound of a factory whistle, the triumphant thump of a time clock, or just the motto "Thank God it's Friday." We love and hate what we do, or what we do offers us a little of both. Somewhere in this mix we have the capacity to be surprised at the moments between moments of our daily grind. This year's Eleanor B. Mathews winner, Tyler Hill, has demonstrated the capacity to surprise us with these moments. His work reminds us that even though what we do shouldn't make us who we are, this tension between work and identity often reels us out of balance with the world.

These keen perceptions reflect the hallmarks of creativity, technical skill, and individual style celebrated in the Eleanor Mathews Award, a part of the *Patterns* tradition of creative excellence since 1983. Professor Mathews not only taught Creative Writing at SC4, inspiring many with her teaching and standards of excellence, but published her own poems in many journals:

Oh chores and daily work that pays,
I grant, are needed, but of all the hours,
Most of all, I like the clockless days...

This excerpt from a stanza of Mathews' *Villanelle to Time* may predate the writing of Tyler Hill, but shows how central these themes are and why her work continues to influence the community of SC4. Tyler is also actively involved with the campus community, having returned to the area after several years in Chicago working as an actor, writer, and teacher. In addition to reading from his work

as part of National Poetry Month, he has taken two creative writing courses and attended several writers' conferences, including a workshop with nationally known author Pam Houston. In workshops, Tyler exhibits the rare ability to really listen to another writer, reflecting his ability to capture those normal yet idiosyncratic moments and moods that make us tick. This year's edition features four poems and two short stories of Tyler's, so readers will have a chance to enjoy reading the voice of a terrific writer who still works the swing shift. *Suzanne Moore*

PATRICK BOURKE AWARD

As the recipient of the Patrick Bourke Award for an outstanding Visual Arts Student, Jennifer Studaker has exhibited a consuming enthusiasm for doing "Art". She has designed and organized and worked and worked and reworked to make art happen-constantly challenging her own art work and asking the question, "how can I make it better?" Jennifer came into the Art Department with a solid high school art background and had already completed many of her general education classes before taking her first studio courses. Now she had the time to find out what art is all about. As it turns out, she didn't discover art this year, but rediscovered something that is an integral part of her life. She comes from a very creative family including a sculptor, musician, dancer and now she has the opportunity to discover her media in the Visual Arts. Jennifer is planning to transfer to Kendall College of Art and Design in Grand Rapids, Michigan to explore advance course work in art with the possibility of majoring in painting and illustration. We wish her well and thank her for sharing her joy of making "Art" with so many of us here at our college. *David Korff*

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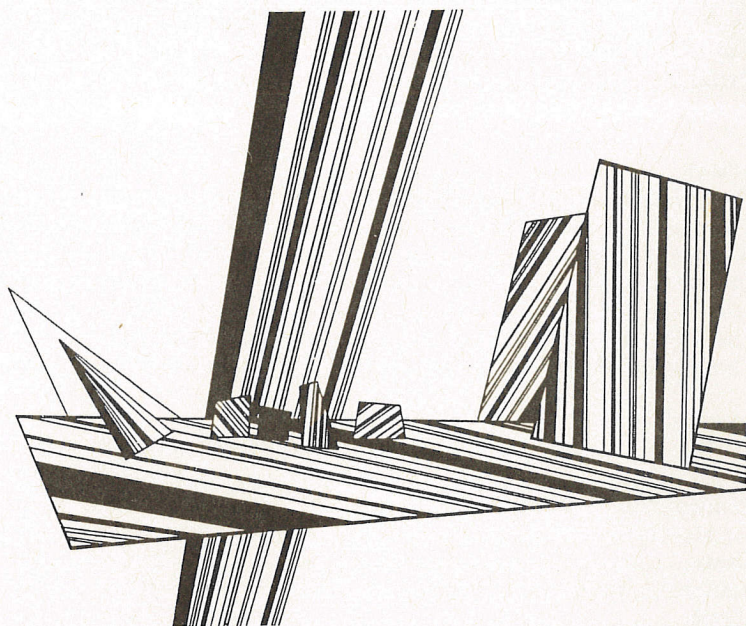
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FLOATING MOSSES

Brian Hoppenworth

XII SELECTION OF MERIT ART

SHORT STORIES



FIXED DAYS
Lindsay Hayosh

SLIPPING

Heather Herrmann-Miller

IT MUST HAVE BEEN BLUE EYE SHADOW coming back into style that reminded me of Mary. I hadn't thought about her for a while. But when TV ads and magazine pages showed smears of metallic gold/blue across the perfect crescent-lid of a thirteen year old, it was then I remembered Mary and her make-up.

I hardly associated Kenneth with Mary. They were two separate entities, never touching except in peripheral places: the snag of a smile in sunlight, the flutter of an eyelid during decisions they were contemplating. When I was eleven I was best friends with Mary. Now I am best friends with Kenneth. Things change and stay the same all at once.

I don't remember much of the summer. I was diagnosed with chronic, low-grade depression. I was bounced around to different doctors, therapists, counselors, all with different theories about my childhood. I tried medication and analysis. But all I really wanted to do was sleep. I insisted that nothing was wrong; I was just tired. But when September came and the leaves started to change so did I; I became brown and hard inside.

When I spent the night at Mary's house, which I often did after baby-sitting with her, we would stay up till two or three in the morning playing Clue. Usually Kenneth would wander in and join us. He didn't say much, but what he did say was spoken softly, gently, as if he cupped it in his hands and gave it over to us. His laugh was deep and throaty, and we had to push a pillow into his face to keep him quiet when we were up late.

Mostly he laughed when Mary made fun of their father and step-mother having sex. I laughed along too, watched the faces and eyes and gestures of the antagonists, hoping I could figure out what they were inferring.

Later, when we went to bed, Mary would shush me when we were talking. "You hear that?" she would say to me, and I would

strain, hold my breath, and sometimes hear a soft thump-thump across the hallway. "That's them. They're at it again." And she would sigh and lie back in bed, her hands folded above her.

"So why is it so noisy?" I asked her. "You know, when you lay like that, isn't it...?" I wasn't sure what my question was but I hoped Mary had the answer.

"You have to move around a lot," she said, and I said, "Oh, yeah," and we talked about other things. Things the night held and kept secret for us, its black velvet self spread around our words, around our ideas about love and children and sex, around our questions about our own bodies and why they bled and hurt the way they did. Finally, the sounds of our sleep came as we lay, bursting and blooming and ripe, shaven and silky and scrubbed clean, bras and underwear off, in thin cotton T-shirts.

I could hardly stand being in school this semester. It seemed ridiculous, actually, but in the facade of keeping appearances, I registered, bought books, signed papers, and attended. Last year, good grades, good instructors, and good fortune got me through exams. I skipped winter and spring and summer classes, and now it was fall and the calendar was telling me and everyone else what to do with our time so we obeyed.

Third week of September. Fourth week of school. Warm outside. I haven't slept in a long time. At least, not at night, not like the rest of the world. I have rented a small house on the curve of Bell Street. I can see the Blue Water Bridge outside my upstairs window. I watch people walk along the boardwalk at night. I open my window and breathe in the evening, the chill of autumn as it creeps over a river and across this country. I listen to the scuttle leaves make as they race across pavement in the wind.

Ten o'clock. Tuesday morning. I am in psychology class. I am trying to listen. I have given up taking notes, taken to staring at leaves stir. The teacher speaks; he asks questions. Students answer. I

chew on an eraser. It seems everyone here is an expert. It seems everyone here knows about things like childhood trauma. It seems everyone agrees with Elizabeth Kubler-Ross's theory on death and dying. Everything is packaged in a neat black box and tied tight with a crisp white bow. The answers are A B C D and E. One out of four. Recovery. Time heals all wounds. I stand up. I gather my things, mutter to the instructor, and leave. I walk out. I walk away. I walk across the lawn, kicking gold and crimson leaves. The crunch they make lulls me inside. It stems the thick black that threatens to suck me under, threatens to buckle me at the knees on the lawn and be caught.

When I get home I close my blinds. I turn on my answering machine. I throw my bag in a corner. I run up the stairs, pull off my jeans and shoes and socks and bra, slink down to nothing but a worn old T-shirt and climb into my bed, shaved left leg slung out over the blankets, and slip into a dreamless, dark sleep.

I don't hear him come in. He has an extra key, because I tend to lose things easily, and even if I didn't he knows where I hide *my* extra key. Maybe he has knocked, but not very loudly. He pulls his jacket off, loosens his tie. He calls to me softly while he walks up the stairs and finally ends up sitting on the hardwood floor across from my bed, where he waits for me to open an eye.

When I see him I groan, flip over, pull the blankets tight. "How did you know?" I ask.

"I just did," he says.

"But how?"

"Promise not to get pissed?"

"Yeah,"

"I used to have a class of Mr. Kyte's. Actually, about three classes. Once in a while we still go to the Quay for a beer. So when I heard you were in his class, I...I asked him to let me know, off the record, if he thought you were okay."

I sigh under the blankets. I am not mad. I am not cold. I am not warm. I am not. I sit up Indian-style, the blankets fall off of me as

I stare at the wall. My long hair is in a ponytail, and this morning I didn't bother with make-up, not even for the zit on my chin. I am zoning I am zoning I am zoned. I like this zoned. I run a hand along my hair. This is Kenneth. This is my best friend. Mary moved to California. Kenneth and I stayed in touch. Had lunch on occasion. With Kenneth there are no surprises. He won't let me have any. He calls me on my bullshit and I let him.

"Take a shower," he tells me. I don't answer. I like this staring at the wall thing. He gets up. Yanks open my curtains. I flinch. He cracks open my window. The air streams in cool, curls around my face and thighs. He flicks on the stereo, sifts through my CD's.

"Anything not so female in here? Amos, Morisette, McLaughlin, Apple, okay, enough." He pulls out an old Billy Joel CD from the bottom of the pile. "Now we're talking." He heads downstairs. "I'll be waiting for some lunch," he tells me.

"Make some yourself," I say and scuttle in my T-shirt down the hallway, to the bathroom.

I have exactly one bottle of Merlot, half-drunk, in my fridge, along with two cans of Diet Pepsi and some cottage cheese. In my cupboard are three cans of tomato soup. Somewhere are Ritz crackers. I expect Kenneth to bitch at me. He does. No coddling here, not today, not from him. Kenneth finds the Ritz crackers. He declares cottage cheese the most 'disgusting thing known to man,' pours my Diet Pepsi down the sink because he's told me 'a hundred times it gives rats cancer,' and says real men don't eat tomato soup, at least not without milk, which I do not have. I have showered and changed into cut-off shorts and a tank top. Kenneth asks about the art show. I tell him I am not going.

"Yes you are," he says. I still say no. The art show is a collection from Michigan's emerging and beginning artists. I have three pieces in the show. I was excited for two weeks. But not now. That was before, this is now. I am zone zone zone zoned. I reach for the Merlot.

Kenneth says, "what, no vodka?" I smile. It's been awhile.

"You are going to this." He suggests family, friends, men he knows I have dated in the past. I say no. Kenneth wears suits to work, and

sexy socks. He asked one time what I meant by sexy socks.

"I don't know" I said, "they're just sexy." Not black, not white, not blue, swirled and calico-ed and semi-sheer.

"Remember when your sister let me borrow her Jordache jeans?" I say out of the blue. Zoned.

"First time you noticed you had an ass," he says to me.

"Yeah," I blush, remembering. Ten years ago skin-tight extra dark jeans with close fitting ankles were the thing. Mary lent me a pair of hers. I walked differently in them, and not because of how they fit. Kenneth noticed. He walked by me at his house, all those years ago, and smacked me on the ass. When I went to cuff him back he was already in his bedroom, door closed.

"Why did you move here?" I ask Kenneth but I already know. Kenneth likes to fish, but not with any of the locals. Instead he walks by, head down, hands in his pockets. He stops, he sniffs, he watches, he listens. He checks the way the moon spreads over the river. He goes down to the beach after midnight and listens to the echoing voices of the men in the boats on the water. Kenneth takes long walks and disappears into the woods for two or three days at a time. These are the times I do not know much about Kenneth, except for that he grumbles and scratches his head and grows a beard. Sometimes, he walks outside of my house without stopping by to say hello. He is following smells I do not sense.

"I love how you change the subject, you know the answer to this already," he says to me, "but for the record it's the fish. Or lack thereof. The black dress."

"What black dress."

"The black dress you bought from way before Mikey, for that Greg-something guy when he took you to see Phantom at the Fisher. I shiver. He throws his suit coat over me.

"The black dress" he says again.

"I look fat in that," I say, it probably doesn't fit."

"Shit," he says.

"You come with me." I say this silently; it is both a question and not a question. I verge on zoning before he can answer.

"Wear the black dress, sweetie."

"Maybe."

"I'll pick you up. Dinner at the Quay first?"

"Drinks at the Quay first?"

I ask Mary if she's ever let a guy touch her. "Yeah," she says, "but not like you think."

"What do you mean?" I ask. She doesn't answer.

We play Clue.

Mr. Green. In the bedroom. With his stick.

I spend the afternoon painting. Afternoon turns to evening. I hear the voices of men and women down by the water. My music is loudly feminine. Oil smears across my face and bare legs. I pull out the black dress and try it on. I think it fits better now. I set it in the corner so as not to smear blue across it.

My hair is pulled back tightly. My make-up is bold, a slash of red across my lips. I wear no nylons. My toenails are painted and show in my sandals. My dress comes above my knee. Thick black straps lie over my shoulders. Kenneth is late. I expect this and pour us both wine. He comes in, kisses me on the cheek. "You look beautiful," he tells me. Kenneth has always told me I am beautiful. He hands me a white rose, sips at his wine.

"You can do this," he says to me.

"I don't want to," I say.

"I know you don't, but this is good for you. This is about you." I cringe. "Amber, it's okay."

I don't answer. I begin to cry. "Damn you." I say to him, "I'm smearing my make-up."

"All this and I love you anyway," he says to me, pulling a tissue

out of his pocket. I grab onto Kenneth's shoulders; I fall into his chest. Kenneth holds me.

"Ready?" he asks when I pull away.

"Give me five minutes."

Kenneth is not tall. He is about three inches taller than I am. Kenneth is of medium build. His shoulders are broad, they are cryable. Zone. He has dark hair and nice teeth. I fall into Kenneth's mud-puddle brown eyes. When I extract myself I am never completely clean.

I walk into the place where the art show is being held. People are sipping drinks in cut crystal glasses. They are clinking ice from vodka and bourbon and whiskey. They are nibbling at finger foods, dabbing napkins at corners of mouths. They move slowly from piece to piece. Conversation is muted, then animated, then muted again.

Here, everyone is an expert. Here, people know the difference between Picasso and Matisse, people know a Gothic arch from one of Roman influence. Here people agree with color and feeling theory: red passion blue sadness green envy, or maybe horny. Black death. White life. Or maybe green is life also. I begin to zone.

Kenneth holds my hand. He speaks to people easily. They like him. They make conversation. Many of these people know him. I forget the exact second when he lets go of my hand and begins gesturing to a well-dressed, well-rehearsed couple. But I remember what it felt like to hold it in my own, and when I push back a strand of hair behind my ear I can smell him on my skin.

I speak to people. They speak to me. Tiny bubbles float through my veins. I am stable. I am not zoning, but I am not far from it if I need protection. I look at the art. I get sucked into some of the paintings, breath, body, limb, soul and mind.

I watch Kenneth across the room.

I have always been in love with Kenneth.

Kenneth and I could never have a relationship, precisely because I love him.

Kenneth is whole, complete, visceral, real. I know exactly how it would feel to make love to him; a comforting conversation. But I am afraid I wouldn't shudder and ache for him, I wouldn't make a memory of how it felt to have his breath stream across my skin, or his beard scratch against me. Kenneth and I could make love, Kenneth and I could have sex, but we could never do both at the same time.

Later, much later, we leave.

Most of my make-up has stayed applied.

I have had too much to drink. Champagne and Merlot. I stumble as I walk up my steps. Kenneth's arm is around me. I smell him / woods and musk and sweat.

"Kenneth," I mumble, almost giggling though I am not amused, "Ken, will you sleep over?"

We are in the house. Kenny stops. Puts his hands in his pockets. He catches his breath quickly.

"Kenny," I say again. "Just sleep with me, That's all. Just sleep next to me. I can't sleep anymore." Tears slip out of my eyes, roll off of my face. The slash of red lipstick is long gone; it has smeared over thin champagne flutes and thickly cut crystal wine glasses.

I slip off my dress, leave it on the floor. I climb into my unmade bed, black bra and panties on. Kenneth lumps his suit over a rickety chair meant for looks only. He's in red flannel boxers. He pulls himself over and around me, his arm across my shoulders and breasts, his leg slung over my own, his breath in my ear.

Kenneth is quiet. Kenneth is nervous. Kenneth's eyes are rimmed in red. The window is open.

We talk; ideas about love and children and sex and why our bodies hurt the way they do are swapped. The moon and stars spread silver over the black night. The evening slips open, holding and sealing the things we say. I could throw up on Kenneth's shoes or answer the door wearing nothing and he would still be Kenneth. I talk about my blackness. A little bit. Kenneth talks about a woman he met last weekend. A little bit. I ask about Mary. She has two children now. Kenneth might go to California this spring. Maybe I can go with him. Maybe.



SPIRITS OF THE BOTTLE

Alexander Furchak

CLANDESTINE

Tyler Hill

HE WAS A FRIEND, A GUY I KNOW FROM WORK. I'd gotten stuff from him before, so I felt like I could trust him, but this time I was getting quite a bit more than usual. My need to help out my friends got the best of me when they told me they needed some too. Two ounces is a lot. It's a lot of money and it's a lot of pot, physically I mean. The roll of bills in my pocket was not something I was used to.

He wanted me to meet him in this parking lot under the bridge by the river. I thought this was a little strange, but he said he didn't want to bring that much stuff into work. Made sense so I said OK. Setting up the deal had kind of given me a rush, like I was some cool underground dude, but driving there I began to think about it. When people get busted they have to tell on other people, and even though I was friends with this guy I wasn't a close friend. Actually I was the kind of friend you give up. So driving to this thing I began to get nervous. I started thinking about the roads leading in and out of the area; if the cops wanted to block it up it wouldn't be hard. Also there were a million places someone could be watching from and I'd never know it.

So there I was, starting to sweat, thinking about how I'd look getting busted for doing something like this, when I got to the avenue that follows the river and leads to the parking lot. I think about turning around, seriously, but that voice in your head that tells you you're being a chicken-shit spoke up, and then I see his car sitting there. I take a quick look around to see if there are any odd vehicles sitting nearby like those surveillance vans you see on TV. There aren't, so I pull up beside him. Oh yeah, this area also happens to be famous for homos hanging out looking for blow jobs. This is getting better all the time, I think.

My friend rolls down his window, "Hey what's up?"

"Nothin' man, how you doin'."

"Come on over," he says. So I do. I open my door and stand

straightening my jacket and looking around one more time. I open his door and get in. It smells like pot; he's burning one and it sits in the ash tray. "Sorry we got to do this here, but I didn't want to take all this shit into work."

"Yeah, I know, it's cool," I say. He picks up the joint from the tray and takes a hit then passes it to me. It's burning hot and the smoke washes over me before I even start to draw on it.

"This is good shit," he says. "You gettin' some for your friends or what?"

Then it dawns on me that he's suspicious of me and that's why we're meeting here in homo land. "Yeah, their guy is out or something, so I told'em I could hook'em up."

"That's cool," he says. He reaches under the seat and pulls out two very plump Glad sandwich bags filled with weed. I lean in the seat and work the wad of bills out of my pocket.

"Dam, that's a lot of pot," I say.

"Two ounces, that ought to last ya a week or so eh?"

"Yeah, at least that." I'm starting to feel very high and the whole thing is beginning to feel like a scene from a Martin Scorsese flick. He takes another drag on the joint as he puts the money under the seat. I take the bags and stick them inside my jacket, but I don't have a breast pocket so I hold them next to my body; they feel lumpy and unnatural. He passes me the joint again and I'm starting to worry about the ride home, but I take another hit to be cool, give it back and say, "That's good for me, Thanks."

"Yeah, that's cool. Well I gotta boogie, Brother."

"Yeah, me too." And I reach for the door; just as I'm about to open it he stops me.

"Hey, if you want this much in the future try to give me five days notice or so. I just happen to have some extra in my own stash this time, cool?"

"Cool, see ya man, I appreciate it." And as I got out I reached to close the door and both bags fell on the ground. I looked up the road instinctively but no one was coming. In my mind I heard surveillance cameras whizzing off a progression of photos as I bent

over, picked up the bags and stashed them back in my jacket. Some drug dealer you are, I thought.

I got in my car and before I got the engine started he was gone in his. Great, this is where they all swoop in and nail me. I looked around again, waiting for it all to come down, my head feeling three feet off my shoulders from the joint, nothing. I started the car and drove very carefully home.



SUSPENSION
Jennifer Studaker

TATTOOS

John David Farrar

LARRY SWERVED THE MONTE CARLO AROUND a piece of lumber lying half way out in the road.

"Shit," he muttered, as he watched the rented trailer dance back and forth in the rear view mirror, "why couldn't we have just rode the bike? I don't know what their fucking problem is anyway." He looked at his Harley Davidson in the mirror again.

"Oh, don't worry, your baby's okay," Barbara teased. "Besides, you're the one who screwed up. I warned you about mama and poppa before we went."

"Well, I still don't get it."

Barbara looked at Larry like a mother scolding a child, "I told you they didn't drink."

"It was goddam slippery."

"You were drunk."

"Was not."

"Were too," Barbara leaned over the console and kissed Larry on the cheek, "dummy."

"They just didn't like my looks."

"Honey you looked fine. You even wore the reindeer sweater she knitted for you before she even met you."

"You made me," Larry growled.

He looked at his fingers on the steering wheel, "L-O-V-E" on the left, and "H-A-T-E" on the right.

"It was probably my tattoos," he said.

"Larry," Barbara rolled her eyes and turned away.

A quiet minute passed as they watched the woods scroll by on opposite sides. Larry was still pissed about last Christmas.

"But I love you and we're gonna always be together so they're gonna have to see me, Barbie," he reached over, pulled her head to him, and kissed her on the forehead. "So why not now."

"Quit whining and relax," Barbara laughed, "I'm only staying one night at mama's."

Larry grunted and let the window down part way while he reached for the ashtray with his right hand. He felt a quick blast of hot air as it tried to force its way into the vehicle against the coolness of the air conditioning. It was early morning but it promised to be a hot July day. He pulled half a joint out of the ashtray, lit it, took a big toke, and passed it to Barbara.

"That reminds me," she said, "don't do any of this around town, it's a small place."

She passed it back and poked Larry in the ribs. "And stay out of trouble. Don't start anything. Be nice and polite, you know what I mean."

"All right, all right, I'll stay in the goddam cabin we rented and watch the one fucking T.V. channel or whatever. Jesus H. Christ, Barbie."

Barbara stroked his arm gently, "I know you don't like this, honey, but it's only one night. I'll get up early and we'll be on our way again. Just us and the trees and the birds and the bees," she sang lightly, swaying her head back and forth.

Larry laughed.

They finished the joint and Larry popped a Led Zeppelin CD in the stereo. The couple rocked and sang together as they drove the last half hour on dirt roads through the woods toward the little town by the lake.

Larry made sure the trailer jack was secure then walked from behind the car to the window, handed Barbara the spare key to the cabin, leaned in and gave her a quick kiss on the cheek.

"Remember, you promised you'd be back early," he said, and started to pull his head back out.

Barbara grabbed him by the ears. "And you promised to stay out of trouble."

She let him go and he stood up, put his feet together, and made the sign with his right hand. "I'll be good, Scout's honor."

Barbara drove off and Larry picked up his bag and a small cooler of pop and went in the cabin. It was stuffy inside so he went around and opened windows before sitting down at a small table. He rolled

a joint. Nobody seemed to be around the other small cabins when they had pulled up. Probably down at the lake, Larry thought, so he grabbed a coke from the cooler and lit the joint. After smoking it, he went out the back of the cabin down the dirt path toward the water. No one was down there either. There were a few sailboats and plenty of powerboats out on the lake. They probably came down from Lakeside, fifteen miles north along the shore, where he and Barb would be tomorrow. Larry kicked around in the sand for a couple minutes and skipped some rocks off the water, then pulled out a cigarette and lit it. Last one. He crumpled the pack up and threw it on the sand, then thought better and stooped and picked it up.

"Hmm, need smokes," he said aloud, and headed back up to the cabin to get his gear and grab his wallet. Ten minutes later Larry was on his bike headed the couple miles south into Barbara's hometown of Woodspier, a small sleepy town with farms inland and an old abandoned factory of some sort on the water. He spotted a tiny store and pulled in the gravel lot.

He stopped to stomp his boots and slap the dust off his chaps before taking off his leather jacket and tossing it over the seat of his Harley. Even on hot days such as this one, Larry always wore a jacket when he rode. He could see a fat, sweating man behind the counter in the store watching him as he took off his helmet and started in, boots crunching loudly on the gravel.

The store was tiny, hot, and dusty, and a thin woman was sweeping the aisles as the wooden screen door slammed behind Larry. She looked up at him, then back down to where she was moving dust from the floor into the air. The number of empty shelves made Larry think the place might be lucky to sell a six pack a week. The fat man behind the counter watched him very closely as he moved about, as if he might slip a Twinkie or a Slim Jim in his pocket and try to leave on his bike. Larry grabbed a bag of Cheetos and went up to the counter. He hadn't noticed a sign outside but there were rows of liquor bottles on shelves behind the counter. He grabbed a pack of Camels from a display rack, tossed them on the counter,

and pointed to a pint of Jack Daniels on the wall. The fat man barely turned his head as he reached back, grabbed the booze and set it on the counter.

"Got ID?" the fat man asked, looking up at Larry suspiciously. Prick, Larry thought, as he plucked his wallet out of his right back pocket, extended his arm, and flipped it open to show his driver's license. The fat man watched Larry's hand the whole way. The wallet was stuffed with twenty-dollar bills.

The fat man, still looking at Larry's hand, suddenly smiled and said, "Welcome to Woodspier, son, you here long?"

Larry thought, what the fuck, and looked down. On the inside of his forearm was an old faded tattoo, an American flag.

"Well it's good to see you. I'm Bob and that's Janet over there. If you need anything, just come on back in." He put Larry's purchases in a bag. Larry nodded, still not speaking, and walked out. The fat guy seemed to want to sit and talk all of a sudden but Larry wasn't interested. Bemused, he put on his coat, hopped on his bike, and headed back north.

He rode past the cabin and all the way to Lakeside, taking swigs from the pint as he rode. Then he turned back and rode to the cabin. He took the pint with him down to the lake and sat there drinking and thinking. The incident in the store didn't make sense. As soon as the fat guy saw his tattoo, his whole attitude changed. Maybe he's patriotic. Humph. As Larry began to feel the whiskey more and more, he also began to think about his woman. He decided he was going to see Barbie. She would be pissed but she knew him. She probably figured he would come. Maybe not. He was going. No he wasn't. Why piss her off? Give her a night with her parents; the rest of this vacation was his. Fuck that. They would be his family soon enough whether they liked it or not, so they might as well start getting used to him now. He headed up the path from the lake.

On the way, Larry changed his mind. He was close to the little store, so he figured he might as well pick up something. Maybe he'd sit and talk with the fat guy, Bill, was it? Keep out of trouble that

way. Larry hopped off his bike at the store, repeated his earlier routine, and walked in.

"Howdy," Bob called, "no one drinks just a little Jack." He reached back and grabbed a fifth as Larry approached the counter. Janet, beside Bob, beamed as she reached to get Larry more cigarettes. Larry shook his head, grabbed some Tic/Tacs, and then set his helmet on the counter to dig for change in his left front pocket. He reached out to pay and Bob frowned slightly. Larry glanced down and remembered the tattoo on this arm, a snake winding out of a skull's eye socket and up around a naked woman's legs. Bob mumbled something. Larry flipped the change on the counter, grabbed his breath mints, and walked out, again without saying a word.

Larry stopped as he was putting on his coat and examined his arms and hands. Tattoos. Two arms, two reactions, he thought. He wondered what if he hadn't taken off his jacket at all... or wore that damned sweater!

Larry turned off the road and headed down the long gravel drive toward Barbie's parents' farmhouse. As he got close, he could see they were out on the porch already, watching him drive up. They didn't look too happy to see him. Barbie was just inside the screen door, behind her parents on the porch, looking out at him also. Smiling, she was shaking her head and giving him the finger. He pulled off his helmet, got off the bike and took a couple of steps toward the porch. Then he stopped, took off his coat, and threw it over his left shoulder, still holding it in his left hand. He thought to himself, if they only had seen this at Christmas, they would have loved me! His left upper arm had a very large tattoo of a heart. A ribbon wound around it and the name "Barbie" was written on the ribbon in bold black lettering. He headed up toward the porch, smiling, his left arm proudly displayed. Barbara's parents continued to glare at Larry. Barbara just shook her head.



IT CAME FROM THE HEAVENS

Yvonne Markel

THE RAVAGING RIVER

Catherine Ciaramella-Orsini

PEGGY SAT AT HER ROLLTOP DESK, the top of her fountain pen between her lips. Pondering. Putting pen to paper she wrote down anything and everything that crossed her mind. It was called brainstorming in English class. After about five minutes, she looked over her list scratching off option after option. Too long, too short, too complicated, too confusing. Disgusted she crumpled the paper, tossing it toward the overflowing wastebasket where it bounced off the other crumpled balls and rolled under her desk.

"This is ridiculous," she sighed. "Just make a decision." But it wasn't that easy. She had been making these decisions for a long time. She was tired.

Maggie, her four year old golden retriever, was napping on Peggy's bed. She raised her head and wagged her tail. Eric had surprised Peggy with the puppy for their sixth wedding anniversary. The dog was her constant companion, never venturing far from Peggy who took her everywhere possible. Maggie made Peggy's lonely life seem almost bearable. Peggy dropped her pen down on the desk, got up and plopped down on her bed. The soft goose feather pillows and grandma's handmade quilt usually brought security to her chaotic life. Not today. Closing her eyes, her mind drifted from one thought to the next. Why was this so difficult? Important dates in her life were marred by the cancer that would not stay in remission. A lumpectomy was her sixteenth birthday present. Her twenty-first birthday was overshadowed by two years of chemotherapy. The first year of marriage brought another two years of chemo treatments. When she and Eric decided to start a family, cancer once again reared its ugly head in the form of a complete hysterectomy. When the cancer surfaced this time, Eric had left. She couldn't blame him. If she could leave she would.

Ten minutes later she pushed herself up off the bed, threw on her lined denim jacket, tied her Rockports and headed outside. Maybe a change of scenery will help, she thought. The day was

balmy. The leaves were beginning to change colors. Red, orange, yellow and deep purple leaves graced the trees and fluttered in the warm breeze. As Maggie barked and ran circles around the yard, chasing sparrows and squirrels, Peggy looked all around her. Grandma, she thought, I wish you were here now. I need your wisdom and strength. With Maggie in tow, she set out for the small grove that lined the rear property line.

Elm, birch, aspen, maple and evergreen trees shared the woods with an array of bushes, wildlife and underbrush. The land sloped slightly toward the property line then dropped seven feet where a small stream twisted and wound its way to the river. Peggy eased her way down the slopes, which were slick from fallen leaves and the rain two days before. Following a small trail she descended to the stream. As she walked along the stream bed she looked at the eroded banks and upturned trees which formed natural bridges across the stream. With every spring thaw the small stream turned into a raging river, eroding more and more of the bank away. Early last year when Eric left, she'd thrown her wedding bouquet into the water and watched as the strong undertow dragged it down. Later that year she found it a mile downstream entangled in the branches of an uprooted elm. Algae and moss grew like her cancer on the satin ribbons and matted silk flowers.

Back up on the bank she picked her way carefully among the underbrush. She had caught poison ivy a couple of times when she was younger, and the memory still lingered. She sat down on a fallen log and watched the wind ripple through the colorful branches. Close by, Maggie sniffed the underbrush for a chipmunk or rabbit. A pair of swallows perched in a birch tree watched the dog. Peggy saw crows and ravens circling the treetops looking for carrion while a couple of squirrels chased each other back and forth across the fallen logs. Picking up a stick, she absentmindedly stirred the dead leaves at her feet exposing the rich peat below. She loved this place. It was serene and beautiful. All through her life when she needed to escape the traumatic events at home she came here. Gazing around the woods she could see the cycle of life in its different stages.

Her hands were getting cold, so she put them in her pockets. Her left hand brushed the letter that she had forgotten she had stuck there. The events of the past few weeks came flooding back. She withdrew the piece of paper and slowly unfolded it. The letter started with the usual salutations. The results of her biopsy followed with the doctor's prognosis. The cancer was in her breast again. Then there were the options. Her options. Too long, too short, too complicated and too confusing. She could receive chemotherapy or opt for a mastectomy but both would just prolong her life and neither could guarantee another remission—not to mention the ill side effects, a hospital stay and a long recovery. She could do nothing and just let the cancer take its course this time, like a ravaging river, eroding her away bit by bit.

She refolded the paper and put it back in her pocket. She wiped the tears from her face on her jacket sleeve and whistled for Maggie. The retriever came bounding to her so fast that Peggy almost fell off the log. Maggie sat down, and as Peggy gave her a hug, the dog licked Peggy's face. What would I do without you? What would happen to you if I wasn't here? Peggy's mind raced as she patted Maggie's neck. She brought out the paper again and flipped it over. On the back she had written the number of a clinic in Canada that was looking for people to submit to a new laser technique as an alternative to chemotherapy or surgery. There were no promises of remission or total eradication, and the possible side effects had not been determined. The technique was still in the experimental stage.

She looked down at Maggie who had fallen asleep at her feet. She would be here for Maggie until there were no options left. As she stood up, the eroded bank caught her eye. That was how she looked at herself now. A river of cancer slowing eroding her away little by little from the inside. She couldn't stop it but she could slow its progress. She bent down and gave Maggie a peck on her nose. She picked up a twig, tossed it into the stream and headed home to call the clinic.



BRITT
Jody Parmann

WITHIN SILENCE

Tyler Hill

HE SEES AGAIN HOW SHE DOES NOT COME NEAR to kiss when she returns home. She does not ask about his day or show interest in his activity. As he talks, she puts away groceries, helter-skelter upon the shelves, and does not look at him. He stops in mid-sentence and she does not notice. He gets up and leaves the room.

Sitting on the couch, flipping channels, he wonders how they got here. It seems he can't reach her and he's not sure he wants to. He never knew it took so much energy to keep it alive. He feels tired, right to his bones. She passes through on her way to the bedroom. She sees his expression and asks why he's looking at her like that. Startled, he tells her he's just looking and quickly goes back to the TV. She moves on. He thinks about following. Cornering her, making her and himself get through this. Maybe he could make her laugh, he thinks. It always gave him a rush to make her laugh. But she has that expression today, as she's had for at least a week. The one that says you annoy, you bother, you don't fulfill.

The remote is warmed by his hand as he stares at the carpet. Time isn't helping he thinks. Time let go doesn't help anything. He looks again to the room where she disappeared and stands. Just then she comes out and asks if he's going to do anything or just hang around the house all evening, but she doesn't stop to hear the answer. She disappears again. He looks at where she was and after a long moment sits back down on the couch.



MUMMY
Mechel Krause

TWO BITS

Yvonne LeTourneau

MAN THAT GAL HAS SOME NASTY OLD HAIR. We've talked before about this and that—she's my neighbor. I chickened out a lot, bringing up the subject of her hair. And each time I would get so close. Damn! I needed to get my hands on it. It kept me up nights sharpening my scissors.

I just don't get it—everything else about her seems just fine. She keeps a clean house—I mean, I've never been invited in or anything, but she's always telling me things like how to eliminate strong carpet odor.

A regular Martha Stewart! She even went ahead and rearranged my pink flamingos and bent-over-woman-in-a-polka-dot-dress lawn ornaments. They do look better on the other side of my house. She's good at laundry—or so I'd guess because she's always telling me how to get armpit and spaghetti sauce stains out of clothes.

Oh, but that hair! I wonder how she can live with it like that—so much of it and all over the place. It comes off her head and gets stuck on her clothes. I imagine it in her spaghetti hanging there on her fork with noodles and sauce as she talks to the unlucky person across from her who has to watch her swallow it. Nasty old hair.

Maybe she's not so neat and clean. She's probably got brushes piled up full of that hair! When she uses 'em, she's just rubbing a brush of nasty old hair through her nasty old hair. The brush can't take any more in. But, if it's anything like me, it's desperate to help her take control of that hair—show her she needs to do it. A simple cut and style is all it'll take. I won't even charge extra to shampoo!

So, I'm in the yard one afternoon raking leaves. She's standing in her yard talking to me but I couldn't listen. I was just looking at her hair—its individual strands and how they slithered around her ears. I kept smiling and nodding and saying, "Uh huh" when I felt it fit in the conversation. All the past conversations we've had about this and that started revisiting me and getting me all riled up. Then

she goes and tells me again how to remove spaghetti sauce and armpit stains. Aye, spaghetti! Aye, that hair! Swallow it no more!

Then I hear the words run out of my mouth, "Would you like me to cut your hair sometime? I don't charge much. And I just sharpened my scissors!"

Ha! I did it! I made the move! Man oh man, the words were so loud—I swear—they were the only things I could hear. I finally offered to help this woman out from under that ratty old nest, that musty fishing net.

I was prepared for so many possible responses: "Yeah! That'd be great, how about tomorrow?" Or, "Hey, well, lemme think about it and I'll get back to you." Or, "Well, actually I've been hoping someone could give me some advice; I'm kind of careful." Or even, "Well, I just got my hair cut ten years ago, maybe it's still too soon." But wouldn't ya know it! The thing I could not have been prepared for—she went and did it. This girl stood there, stared at me, and said nothing—nothing!

I panicked! Oh man! Maybe she didn't hear me? Am I going to have to live through another winter wondering how she fits her hood over her head? I mustered up the courage to ask again...

But she cut me off with some babble about stuff to do, and turned and walked away—kicking up leaves behind her. Left me standing there with my yard gnome, contemplating the grass.

ESSAYS



MARROW
Alissa Nicol

THE FIRST TIME I TRACKED A WHITETAIL

Karen S. Tanton

MY APPRECIATION FOR THE OUTDOORS BEGAN when I was a child. During the preseason of deer hunting, my father would take my brothers, sister and me scouting. Once we were in the field, Dad took the time to show us the animal signs that he found. He would look for deer signs, such as trails that were heavily traveled; he also looked for feeding and bedding areas, droppings, and fresh rubs. Rubs are created when a buck runs its antlers up and down small trees and saplings. This ritual not only helps in the shedding of the thick velvet from their antlers, but it also strips the bark from the trees. By doing this, a buck creates a beacon that is easy to see in the dark grayness of the woods. On the ground, my father also looked for cleared patches where the buck pawed up the ground, making a scrape. This was another sign that a buck was in the area.

He also showed us coon tracks along a creek, and some trees and plants that he said we should keep our eyes open for. He said we should look out for hawthorne trees, because they have long sharp needle-like thorns and for nettles, which have thorns on the tips of their leaves. If touched, this plant would cause a painful, itchy irritation that would make you feel like you were going insane. My father also showed us things that weren't harmful. I remember the first time I saw an acorn. My dad knelt down to pick up something from the ground. When he stood up, I could see that he was rolling small, semi-round objects in his hands. As he showed them to us, I remember thinking they looked like little heads wearing hats. He told us they were acorns, and that they fell from oak trees.

I liked being in the woods because it gave me a first hand experience about the stories that my father and uncles would tell about hunting. This gave me a vivid image of their tales. I also enjoyed learning about something that to me seemed to be mysterious. It would have stayed that way if it hadn't been for my dad, but as my brothers became old enough to hunt with my dad, that ended the

scouting trips for me. I didn't say anything because this was a time when girls didn't do things like that. I didn't get a chance to go in the woods again until a few years later.

It was an evening in October. I had finished the dishes. It was an hour after dark. Now that I had time to sit and relax, I began channel surfing, when the phone rang. It was my husband Don. He had spent the evening bow hunting. I was waiting for him to come home when he called. "Karen I need you to come get me," he said. "I am at El Rancho on Lapeer."

Hearing this I said, "You got one!"

"Yes but I lost the trail," he said.

"Why are you on Lapeer?" I asked.

"My flash light went out, I walked all the way through the woods, because I couldn't see," he replied. "I am going to pick up Tom, if he is home. I hope we can find it."

"If he isn't home, can I help you?" I asked.

He told me, "I don't know; I'll see."

Hearing this I felt disappointed, and I hoped that when I picked him up that I could convince him to take me with them.

After hanging up, I found the lanterns. Then, I went out to start the truck. The night air was warm and humid. When I arrived at the restaurant, Don was already waiting at the road. As he was getting in the truck, I begged him to take me with him. I didn't believe that he would take me. When he finally said I could go, I was anxious to get out there.

We picked up Tom and set out for West Water. We drove across the field to the tree line. As we got out of the truck, I noticed there was a musty smell in the air; the grass was tall and wet. Because that night was so cloudy, it was dark in the field. It was even darker in the woods, so we could barely see. We turned on the flashlights and lit the lantern. Then, we set out to find the blood trail. Don had marked it earlier with his arrow before he started tracking. After a few minutes, we found his arrow. It was covered with hair and blood. This was a good sign, so we were confident that we would find the buck. We were sure to have a good blood trail.

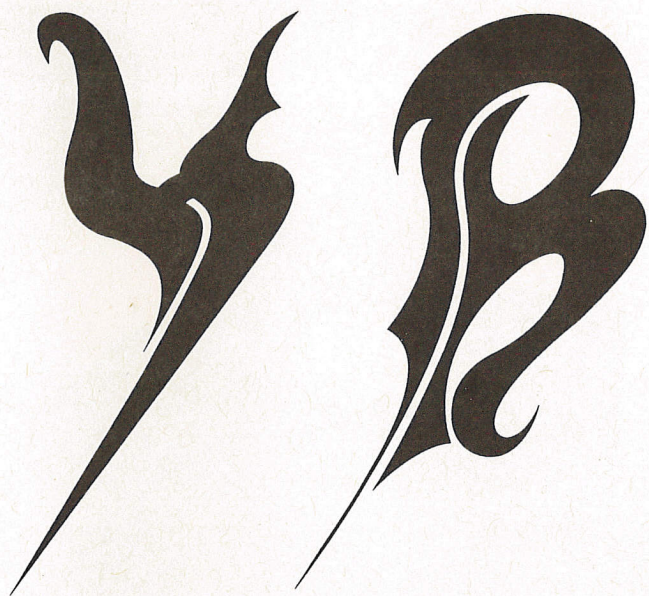
Things were going well, until it started to sprinkle. With every passing second, it sprinkled harder and harder. By this time, I was sweating, and the trail was getting sparse. Now that the trail was getting harder to follow, I was put on point. I stood marking the last sign of blood. The guys were about ten yards away trying to locate the trail again. When I looked down to my right, I noticed that the buck had changed direction. "I found the trail," I said.

At first, they didn't believe me, until they saw it for themselves. It led us right to the buck. It was just forty yards away. I was happy and excited, but mostly I was glad because now I would be thought of as being important to the search and not just someone tagging along. Don was proud, and relieved that we had found the buck. Once Don finished the process of field dressing the six-point buck, it was time for the real work to begin.

Dragging a hundred and fifty-pound buck out of the woods is an especially large task. We had to overcome many obstacles. There were fallen trees and limbs to go over or around. There were also thick clumps of saplings and grasses to go through. The damp and warm weather also made it difficult. About every eighty to a hundred yards, we would stop so that they could catch their breath. As we approached the field, we took a few minutes to replay the events that brought us back to the truck.

I must admit that I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I will never forget the experiences of that night, nor will I forget Don's smile. It was from one ear to the other. In the summer of the following year, Don told me that he knew someone that was selling a bow, and that it would be perfect for me. He asked me if I was interested, so I told him that I was. A few days later Don brought the bow home. It felt like Christmas. I spent that summer and fall practicing a lot. Though I really didn't get to hunt that fall, I did get to the following fall, and when the first opportunity presented itself on opening morning, all of the practice paid off. I tagged my first deer at eight o'clock that morning, which is its own story in itself. I can only tell you how I feel when I am in the woods, but in order for you

to gain an appreciation for the woods, you have to get out there and experience it for yourself.



TYPEFACE DESIGN
Jake Pettinato



WINDSOR/SCALE
Charlie Raymond

THROUGH SNOW AND TIME

John R. Sayers

THE KEWEENAW ENINSULA, once a major economic center of northern Michigan during the great mining booms of the 19th century, is now a sparsely populated land of trees, mountains, and for most of the year, 200 to 300 inches of snow. Along with all the ghost towns of settlements past, there are a few towns that remain. After the mining booms of the 19th century, there was no need to run many of the plants and factories, so they were shut down. This unfortunate event put many men out of work and many families without food on the table. I found the history of the area extremely fascinating, so when I lived there for nearly a year, I would always explore those factories. One day, I was walking around the haunting remains of an abandoned smelting plant just outside of Hancock and along Portage Lake, when I learned a valuable lesson.

I was driving home, one late afternoon, after picking up my car from the repair shop, when my gaze fell upon an old, dilapidated complex of buildings up ahead. Perhaps it was my immense curiosity, but a strange feeling compelled me to pull into the entranceway. It seemed as if something were beckoning me to enter. I slowed down when I approached the entrance and cautiously signaled a left hand turn. When the traffic cleared, I accelerated onto the gravel road that led to the old building. However, I did not see the puddle as large as a lake in the middle of the entryway.

I felt the front of my car drop as a torrent of water vaulted against my windshield, and the outside world melted. I reflexively turned on my wipers. After I was through the water, I got out of the car, shook my head, and sighed. I checked for any tire damage. Knowing my luck, I could just see myself, blowing my front tires right after getting a broken axle fixed. As I was about to get back in the car, I noticed the rundown house on the corner, which despite its appearance, seemed to be inhabited.

The white paint was chipping, revealing the weathered wood

underneath. The shutters were seceding from the house as well. A thin film of dirt tainted the windows, making the white curtains behind the glass appear manila. A small car and an old pickup truck in the driveway gave the only indication that people still lived in the old and rundown house. There were also several "No Trespassing" and "Keep Out" signs around the yard as well. I turned back to my car, and contrary to my predictions, my tires remained inflated, and I drove down the way.

The farther I continued down the twisting driveway, the higher the snow banks grew on each side. The potholes multiplied and the shaking of my car grew increasingly irritating. It seemed odd that anyone would bother plowing such a treacherous road. When I reached the end, I came to a larger area of plowed space. The first thing that caught my eye was the rusted remains of an old train engine with its coal car still in tow.

I shut off my car and got out. The cold April wind whipped against my face as the dark clouds soared overhead. This place felt cursed and an eerie feeling overcame me. Despite the unease I had, I could not help but walk over towards the train. The closer I walked to the engine, the deeper the snow became. All of a sudden, my left leg was swallowed by the snow. I sunk in past my knees. The wet snow caused my pants to cling to my legs. The sharp feeling of coldness shot all the way to my bones. I reflexively jumped back to a more shallow area and decided to observe the old train from there. Apparently, there were things about this place I did not realize at first.

The train was sitting on a few surviving rails. The entire metal front was dull gray with blotches of rust. The corroded brown infection seemed to eat away at the steel beast's vitals. Valves, pipes, and other crucial instruments were pocked with holes and cracks. The rear of the engine was made of wood. I thought I could make out black paint that might have encompassed that section. It was hard to tell though, because the wood was rotting away, and some pieces had fallen to the ground. The rusty disease had spread to the coal car as well. The bed lay empty of coal, but a new cargo of

white snow had replaced it. I stared at the steel monster, imagining I was a hundred years in the past...

I could almost see the pale white steam rising from underneath the engine. The front section of the engine looked bright silver while the engineer's station and coal car were as pitch black as midnight of a new moon. A faint voice of the conductor cried out over both the loud racket of the engine and the drone of industrial age machinery in the background. I could picture the rest of the cars in line behind their bold and fearless leader. They began to clank, one by one, as the engine pulled forward. A loud horn blew as the train accelerated closer to me. A terrible crash of thunder from underneath the train, the sound of spewing steam, gears grinding, and the screech of metal on metal from the wheels overpowered the conductor's voice. The train came closer and closer and closer to me. It seemed as if was going to hit me, but I opened my eyes... The wind whipped around my body as if an apparition of the steel beast had driven through me on its way to a destination in the past. The dead train still remained cold, rotting, and lifeless.

I turned my head to the right so I could look at the main buildings of the factory. The aging complex was rather large. It appeared to be made of four different sized buildings that were connected in a row. From what I saw when I entered, it seemed as if there were storage facilities and warehouses around the main factory in the shape of a horseshoe. The building closest to me was made of red and pink brick with five doors large enough to fit an early automobile through. Vertical wooden planks boarded each of these doors. Shaped like a pole barn, the broad side faced the entrance, and was about fifty yards long. Atop the triangular roof sat a smaller, dark, metal building. The metal section, which sat at the third level, had an open face in my direction. A track supported by steel girders ran overhead that was probably used to load cargo onto trains. A smokestack rose above the ruins in the background like a barren flagpole of an abandoned fortress. As I thought about the ghostly scene, I felt chills down my spine. I did not think I would ever shake that feeling.

The second building in the row looked much like the first, except that it ran in the opposite direction. The reddish brick was slowly disappearing as banks of snow on the ground and a snow covered roof seemed to be drawn together. A single door, buried halfway in the snow, was the only feature along the brick wall of the building.

The third building was the tallest of the complex. Roughly three stories tall, it too had a peaked roof design. It was built in the same direction as the smaller second building. The side of the structure facing the first two buildings was once a gray metal, but had rusted so badly that only a few spots retained their original color. The metal wrapped around the corners and constituted a fifth of the broad side. The rest of that building was a foggy gray stone that matched the gloomy sky. Evenly spaced windows occupied the upper perimeter. The glass had long since broken or fallen out. A pulley system hung outside the farthest window. I wanted to explore the building. I could only imagine what hid in the shadows, waiting to be uncovered. However, there was no way to enter, since all doors had been blocked off. I looked up at the windows and the darkness lurking within. Once again, I felt chills as I wondered if the eeriness would ever fade from this place.

The last building in the row was made of the same materials as the first two buildings. The pink and red bricks surrounded a small weathered door that sat along the ground. Two sets of large windows perched higher on the wall. These two windows were divided into smaller panes with the glass still intact, except for a few broken windows. A large wooden ramp that began about forty or fifty yards away from the last building with railroad tracks led up to the second floor. After realizing that carts once filled with raw materials were pushed up here, I wondered if I could climb it. Before testing my hypothesis, I thought it might be a bad idea.

I had reached the end of the factory. Beyond the buildings were snow mounds and forest. I turned around, looking for anyone in the area. Although I did not see anyone, I felt uneasy, as if someone were watching me. I could not shake the ghostly feeling and was

convinced that I had been there long enough. As I began walking back to my car, a flock of pigeons swarmed out from in between two of the buildings. I felt my heart sink into my stomach and I was panting from the sudden scare. "Stupid birds," I thought.

I once again started towards my car. As I was walking, I began to think about the significance of this place. At one time, this aging, rotting, rusting, complex was a bustling workplace for hundreds of men. Many of these men had families: wives, children, and other family members living with them. At that time, very few if any women worked. The men worked long days in harsh conditions, especially during the winters of the Keweenaw. Many worked nine to twelve hour shifts, six days a week, just to put food on the table, a roof over their families' heads, and clothes on their backs. After the boom, when the mining operations shut down, and this plant was forced to shut down as well, all of these families were left alone. This factory had been the source of life for hundreds of people.

I began thinking about my own life. My father worked in a factory to support our family as well. Although times have changed, unions have grown stronger, working conditions have improved, and wages have increased, the fear of having the plant shut down or experiencing lay-offs due to downsizing still haunts the back of our minds. My father sacrificed no less than the men who worked in that Hancock smelting plant. It seems as if there is a common dream shared among all parents. Sacrifice all one has, so the children will be better off.

As I drew closer to my car, the chilly evening air nudged me forward. I turned around and observed the factory once more. I could almost hear the grinding of the train, the commotion of nineteenth-century machinery, and the voices of workers past. The eeriness of the place somehow faded and I felt a solemn peace and serenity. I turned back around and got in my car. Sitting there, with a feeling of indebtedness while thinking about my own future, I silently thanked my father and drove away.



ORTHONELL
Lindsay Hayosh

WISDOM GAINED

Susan Akkerman

MY DAD WAS A HUGE MAN, COLOSSAL. AT FIVE FEET, eight inches tall there was no one larger in my eyes. He was my provider, my counselor, my protector, my world. Throughout my life he was by my side. He tied my shoes and taught me to dance. Kind, gentle, funny and strong, he was the standard by which, for the rest of my life, I would measure all men. Although I would come to glean wisdom from this event this man, whom I adored above all other men, my dad, broke my heart one day.

Ferndale, where I lived, was a charming little suburban town. It was the first town north of Detroit. Fashionable Ferndale is what the local people called it. Only about a mile square, it was divided down the middle by Woodward Avenue, a majestic tree lined thoroughfare that began in downtown Detroit and ran through the suburbs, north and beyond. I lived in what was called the "Motor Mile." My street, Silman, as did most of the streets, ran at a right angle to Woodward. Every street began with a business, usually a car dealership, followed by an alley, then the family-filled middle-class houses. This is where I grew up, where I went to school, where I went to church, where I played, and where I felt safe. This was my neighborhood.

Early one evening in the fall of my seventeenth year, I threw on my favorite blue poncho, bounded down the stairs, calling over my shoulder, "I'm going to mail a letter," as the door slammed behind me. Not an unusual occurrence as I was frequently writing to college friends or boys in the service and the mailbox was on the corner. This time, however, it was more an excuse to sneak a cigarette and make a quick dash to the party store for another pack. The store was only four blocks away: Silman, Channing, Wordsworth, Marshall. I'd be back before anyone missed me, or so I thought. After walking the first block to Channing, preparing to cross, my nightmare began. He was sitting there in his car, a faceless man in the shadows. Thinking he was politely waiting for me to

cross, I proceeded. I was wrong.

"Would you like a ride?" he asked.

"No thank you," I replied without meeting his eyes. My dad had taught me two safety rules: Don't walk through the alleys and never take a ride from a stranger. I quickened my pace and continued to cross in front of his car on my way. Now, he was angry. Those names he called me, I had never heard them before. The venom in his voice told me these words were vulgar. "Walk faster. Don't look back," I thought.

I continued up Woodward Avenue toward Wordsworth Street, at a brisk pace, still not fully realizing my danger. The small, olive green car turned the corner coming up Woodward past me and then pulled over to block my way. Now, I was scared. In one quick move, I turned and headed back south toward home. He continued on, turned the corner, and disappeared. I just wanted to get home, for the cigarettes: I wanted my dad. Before I reached Channing, the evil stranger was there. He had circled back through the alley and again blocked my path. His voice was louder now. The words more threatening. "When did it get so dark?" I thought. "Don't any of these cars driving by know I'm in trouble?"

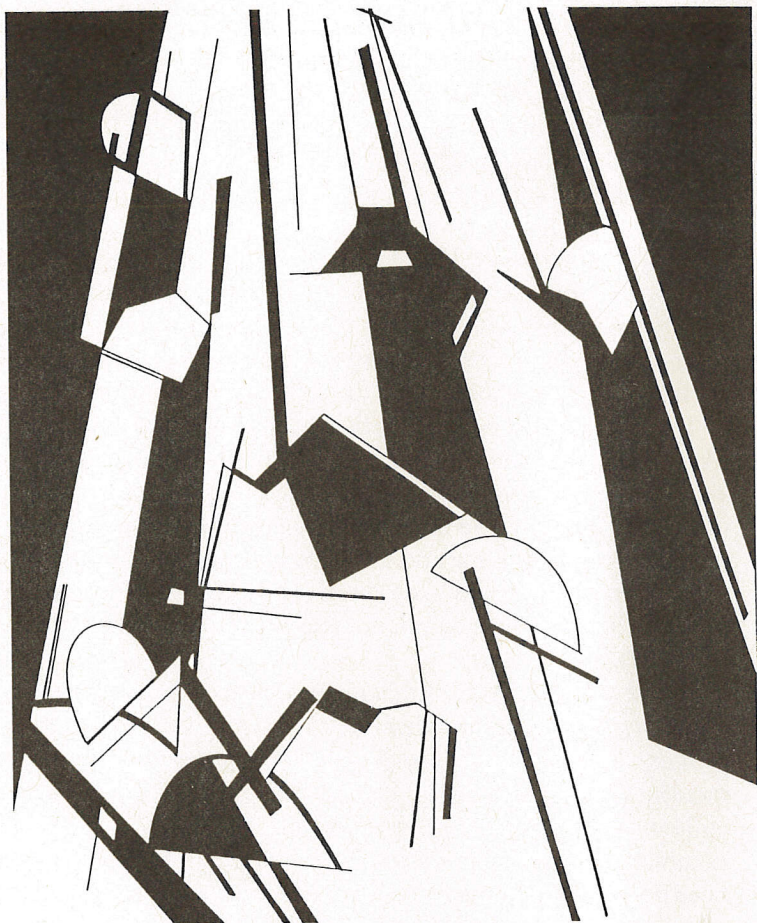
Again I turned, now walking north again toward the party store. Faster and faster I walked, my sides aching now. "If I can just make it to the party store, Dad will come and rescue me." Again the man came around and blocked my path. I turned, this time watching as he circled around to the alley. As soon as he was out of sight, I turned again and ran back toward the store, crossing Wordsworth, now Marshall and on to the store. "Oh my God," I thought as I approached. The lights were out and a sign hung on the door: "Closed. On vacation!" By now my heart was pounding; I was gasping for breath. I had to get home. It was no time to panic. With my thoughts racing and my heart pounding, I started for home. I was walking, then running, then walking, my sides aching and all the while my head scanning back and forth searching for my assailant. Marshall, Wordsworth, Channing, "Where did he go?" I was almost to Silman. I could see someone ahead waiting at the bus

stop, a man. Relieved, I decided to ask this stranger to walk me home. Maybe he would protect me from this evil man. Just as I approached, near enough to speak, I took one more look over my shoulder when I spotted it. There in the shadows on Silman was the olive green car/empty. This was my stalker!

Before I had time to escape, he was behind me, his hand grabbing my hair, pulling me back. Then, I felt his hands on my neck, his hot breath stinking behind me. "This can't be it," I thought. "I'm only four houses from home." With all the courage, all the strength I could muster, I reached up, gouging my fingernails deep into his arms and raking them down to his hands. He winced with pain, releasing his grip just long enough for me to bolt, running never looking back. One house, two, three, four, I crashed through my front door screaming for my dad, shaking now uncontrollably.

It seemed only seconds before the police arrived and reports were taken. Soon, they were gone and I wanted only for my dad to hold me in his arms, to rock me and tell me I was safe. As I rose from where I'd been sitting on the foyer stairs, my dad, my protector, my idol, looked down at me and said, "What did you do to provoke this?" After what seemed like a speechless eternity, I turned and ran up the stairs. No longer afraid, nor angry, I wanted only to vomit. I was crushed.

We never again spoke of that night. I tucked it away in the abysmal cavern of the mind where my hurt is stored. Although the memory occasionally crept back to the surface, it was too painful an incident to reflect on for long. As I have grown, married, and raised children of my own, that moment in time, eventually, did rise up to become an embraceable lesson. That one moment, forever, redefined my dad with humanness. To be human was after all, all that I, myself, could ever aspire to be, and that was okay.



MOVING UP
Jennifer Studaker

QUEEN OF ANGELS

Susan Akkerman

WITH THE CHANGE OF SEASONS comes my time of personal renewal. Anxious anticipation spurs me on as I wind my way through the streets of Saginaw toward my house of quiet repose. As I turn the corner and take the long approach, I can see my old friend waiting for me, her door wide open on this Friday afternoon, as though waving me in with her hand. Each September, I set aside this third weekend to spend in silence with fifty or so other women. As a child awaits Christmas morning, so do I await my autumn retreat. This is Queen of Angels Retreat House, my spiritual oasis.

Father Bob stands at the open door, with his smiling eyes, tonsured head, and flowing brown robe, greeting the arriving women. So apart from my everyday world, he seems a bit more like Obi-Wan-Kenobi than a Capuchin monk. Crossing the threshold, I begin to feel like Alice stepping through the looking glass, my real world disappearing behind me. I'm immediately enveloped in the amber shroud of late afternoon sun that fills the entryway. My hands, stiff from the chore of driving, already begin to relax. Check-in is brief and orderly, consistent with the stress-free aura that will dominate this weekend. This appeals to my practical nature. With plastic name tag in hand, I amble down the long dimly lighted hallway, following the amusing cobblestone print of the old carpet. I smile and wonder, "Who chose this pattern?" But it brings me comfort, each stone guiding the way.

My room is identical to the thirty other rooms that line both sides of this hallway, interrupted midway by a common lavatory and shower. Symmetrically laid out, two such hallways surround this house. The institutional design of these rooms, which under other circumstances might seem cold, is familiar. On entering, I immediately notice the spot on the faded salmon carpet, where two years before, I had spilled my coffee. I wince, ruefully at first, but secretly feel comforted by my personal method for marking my territory.

The cinder-block walls are bathed in pink and decorated with Catholic predictability: a wooden crucifix on one wall, a painting of St. Francis and his animals on the other, and a small white porcelain holy water cup by the door. It takes only a few minutes to settle myself. My suitcase sits at the foot of the chenille-covered bed. Personal items are arranged with care atop the small blond dresser which also efficiently serves as a desk. There's barely enough room for my traveling coffee pot, my big transgression. It will sit within reach of the corner leather chair where I'll spend my evenings reading by the soft yellow light of the floor lamp that sits between my chair and bed. I revel in this frugal setting.

The house is filling now with all the women who, like me, are drawn here year after year. We will soon be sharing our first meal. The familiar chiming of the bell calls us together. As we patiently await, with our eyes cast down, for the doors of the bright dining hall to open, I think I can hear the stomach growling of the petite woman standing next to me. We never make eye contact, awkward at first with our silence. Mealtime is a gift to the senses; the aroma of freshly baked yeast rolls fills the air. The slices of baked ham, pyramids of melon wedges, and towers of sliced pineapple, are obviously prepared by skillful hands. Slowly savoring each bite, I gaze out the window at the ghostly apparition of a faceless elderly monk tending the distant garden. The tinkling symphony of china and silver rises to a hypnotic crescendo, bringing a conclusion to our simple feast. We will meet six times for meals, a welcome distraction from the screaming silence. All too soon, like mice, we quickly scurry to our mouse holes, until chimes call us again for evening prayers in the chapel. This night, the chapel has the eerie glow of candle light illuminating the blackened stained-glass windows. I sit behind two elderly women. My mind seems focused more on the backs of their heads than on my prayers. I study with curiosity the striking similarity in the way their thin gray hair sits in curls that were never brushed out from the rollers that held them; each curl is outlined uniformly by lines of pink scalp. It makes me wonder if they are sisters, or perhaps arthritis prevents them from reaching

behind to brush. I realized what a peaceful indulgence it is to sit here in our elastic waistbands and fuzzy slippers.

Bedtime comes early. As though synchronized, the heavy wooden door of each room clunks shut. To crawl between my white cotton sheets, so soft from years of washing, and pull the thick wool blanket around my ears, is like adding hot fudge to an ice-cream that's already too rich. The night is filled with hours of restless sleep, gently broken by the baritone singing of the water pipes as, one-by-one, the women make their nocturnal journey to the lavatory and flush. I smile as I drift back to sleep. Morning tiptoes in stealthily between the cracks in the drapes. Knowing that breakfast chimes are still an hour away, I selfishly brew my morning coffee, knowing full well the pungent aroma will soon permeate the hallway. I can't resist the temptation. The gurgling, spitting, and coughing of the pot shouts out my sin for all to hear.

My weekend retreat ends, all too quickly; but knowing it's time, I gather my belongings. As I again cross over the threshold, departing my Wonderland, I feel like the emerging butterfly shedding its chrysalis. With new-found energy I start for home, glancing in the rearview mirror at my old friend, who this time, is waving goodbye. "See you next year," I say.



UP CLOSE
Jennifer Studaker

LESSONS IN LIFE

Brenda Woods

ON JUNE 19, 2000, I EAGERLY BEGAN MY NEW POSITION as a unit secretary on the pediatrics floor at Port Huron Hospital. I arrived at my post promptly at 3:00 p.m. anxious to learn all about my new job. What I learned over the next two weeks sent chills down my spine and made me fearful that I had made a big mistake! Everyone on staff had his or her own special story about Donny—a thirteen-year-old child with cystic fibrosis who was known as a “frequent flyer” on the pediatric unit. With each new story, the details grew more and more horrifying. Donny was described as a “dreadful, demon spawn” and the nurses were confident that his ultimate goal in life was to make people miserable. The mere utterance of his name was forbidden; it was certain to ensure his return before the day ended. As one can imagine, I couldn’t avoid forming an image in my mind of this child. I was unaware of the important lessons I was about to learn.

Two weeks later, I went into the battlefield determined to stand my ground. This was my first experience with Donny. When I walked into his room, I was not prepared for what I saw. There sat a small framed, red-headed boy with freckles. He had an innocent façade, but the glimmer in his eyes revealed that there was some truth to what the nurses had told me. After introductions, his curiosity took over. He wanted to know why I was there, if I was qualified to care for him, and he tested my knowledge at every opportunity. In no time at all, I was well aware that I was dealing with an intelligent child. Donny had a charismatic charm that enabled him to accomplish almost anything. Although I could see some of the characteristics described to me previously, I had a difficult time understanding how he could be as terrible as I had heard. He had a warm, loving side that just seemed to lash out with hope that someone would cling onto him. I decided that Donny just needed time to warm up to me—then his true colors would be revealed!

Over the next month I began to learn more about Donny. He was a very artistic child, and he had become quite the entrepreneur, setting up shop right there in room 388 his regular accommodations. There he spent hour after hour, day after day, creating items to sell to hospital staff. Among his merchandise were picture frames made from popsicle sticks that were lavishly adorned with glitter, small stuffed pillows in the shape of silly faces, and many cards and pictures each uniquely autographed by the artist. Although his sales technique was somewhat bold and lacked appeal, he managed to sell everything! Most people saw this as an annoying act and became very disturbed by his "begging for money." I saw something different. Every penny this frail child earned was not spent selfishly on himself, but on the people who meant the most to him—the staff! We had become his hospital family, and he took every opportunity to bestow us with small gifts from his heart. In looking back, I had learned my first lesson: work hard, make a little money, and give selflessly to those you love.

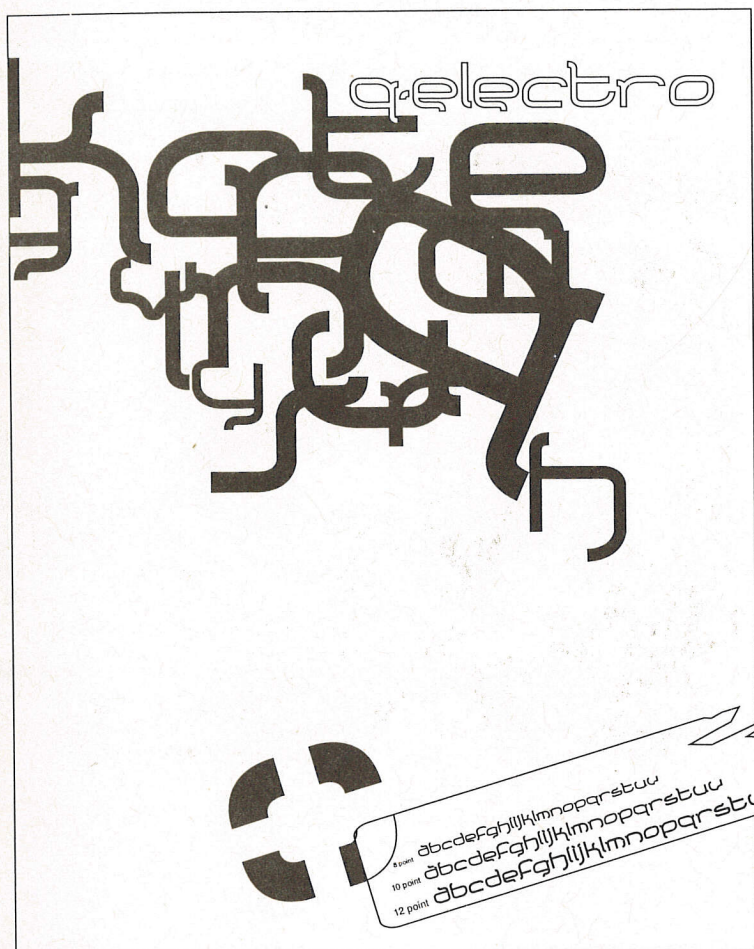
Several months later, an incident occurred that would turn out to be my next lesson. I remember it vividly. It was a Sunday afternoon, and Donny had been sitting in his room for countless hours without any visitors. From my desk down the hall I could hear a loud banging noise echoing from his room. I wandered down the hall to investigate. There sat Donny on the side of his bed, dangling his thin legs and periodically kicking the metal railing to form a make-shift alarm to draw our attention. He had placed his head into the palms of his hands and rested his elbows on his bedside table clearly a sign of utter boredom! I asked him what was wrong, and he immediately confirmed my assumption. He was bored! I asked him what he had been doing and quickly his face lit up and a smile engulfed his freckled face. He pulled his bedside table, still containing his dinner tray, a little closer to him. "Watch this!" he exclaimed. With that, he picked up a packet of sugar and began smearing it in what remained of his mashed potatoes. I was puzzled and couldn't imagine what he was about to do. In a split second, he

lowered his arm as low as it would go with the concoction facing palm up. He flung his arm with great force up toward the ceiling. I could not believe what I had seen. There on the ceiling were about twenty packets of sugar, somewhat glued into position by mashed potatoes! I had to leave the room to keep from laughing hysterically. If this were something my own child had done, I would have been furious. Somehow, with Donny it was different. I could see that he was simply trying to make fun out of an otherwise boring day (of which he encountered many!). His objects of entertainment were few, so he made do with the simple things he had at hand. Hence lesson number two: laugh, play, smile, and live life to the fullest every day.

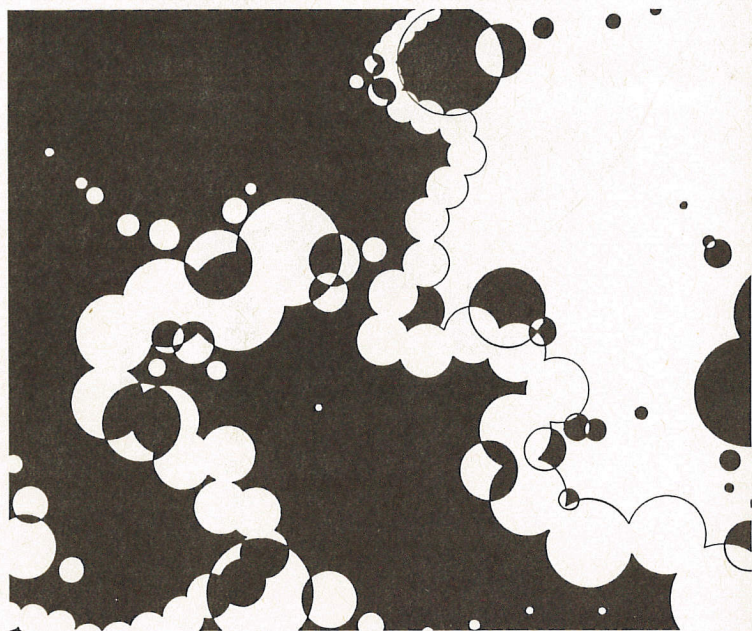
After knowing Donny for nearly a year, I began to learn more about his personality. He loved to play tricks on people and was often encouraged by his respiratory therapist, Mike. One evening, while a group of staff members were working in Donny's room, I saw the plans for a joke unravel before my eyes. While Donny kept his nurse occupied, Mike began rolling a vial of saline solution between his fingers to warm it. He gently opened the vial and (on Donny's cue) flung it at the back of the nurse's arm while making a tremendous sneezing sound. The room was completely silent. The nurse cringed at the thought of being "sneezed on," but continued working without a word. The entire process was repeated a second time, but this time the nurse turned on her heel as if to scold Mike. Everyone burst into laughter! No matter how sick Donny felt, he always loved to make people laugh. My third lesson from Donny: laughter truly is the best medicine.

On June 16, 2001, Donny went to be with the Lord. Although his antics were viewed by many as devilish and rotten, he is missed by all. A plaque hangs on the wall outside the door of room 388 that simply reads "Donny's Room." I hear echoes of his laughter down the halls and hold his memory deep within my heart. Most of all, I learned that the quality of life is not measured by my mate-

rial possessions, my job, or my financial status, but by the little things that I learned from a small boy named Donny.



TYPEFACE DESIGN Q-ELECTRO
Jason Donovan



REFLECTIONS
Alexander Furchak

THE FIFTEEN MINUTE HOUR

Linda Lincoln

ON MY FIRST DAY OF TEACHING, I arrive at the school early, though there is nothing more for me to do to prepare. I have been substitute teaching for several years, but this extended assignment represents the first time I will be teaching from my own lesson plan, using my own materials, and I can hardly wait to get started. I have probably spent more time than necessary getting ready for the big day, but, I think, better too much preparation than not enough.

I confess that part of my enthusiasm comes from a firm belief that I can improve on Mr. Thomas's methods. Not that I think him an incompetent teacher, exactly, but in subbing his class over the past four months, I have often found his notes and plans disorganized and difficult to understand. There were even times when he seemed to have abandoned his lesson plans entirely, never accomplishing the objectives he had set out, and his classes seemed poorly disciplined in other ways. I attribute this to his age and the fact that he has been teaching for many years and has grown lax. I have no doubt that I can improve on his methods and bring new vitality and order to his classroom.

The class starts at 9:00, theoretically. By 9:05 I realize my first mistake. I have allowed only five minutes for the students to come in and get settled. I have forgotten that every wave of students out of a room is immediately followed by a backwash of students returning. The resulting chaos lasts quite a bit longer than expected.

"Mrs. L, did I leave my social science book here?" "Don't mark me absent. I'll be right back. I left my math book in the gym." "Can I go with him to get his math book?" "I left a blue notebook with Michael Jordan on it right here yesterday and now it's gone." "I went to the speech room but Miss Kay wasn't there, so should I go to social studies or just stay here?"

I handle these minor problems as quickly as possible and turn to the lesson for the day. It is 9:10 am.

I begin by collecting homework and excuses. "I have it done but

it's in my dad's car. He had to pick me up yesterday because Mom was with my grandma in the hospital. So he dropped me at soccer practice and my mom picked me up and I forgot to get my homework out of his car." "I forgot" ... "I musta left it home" ... "it was here a minute ago. I just can't figure out where it went."

A few students admit that they didn't do the homework, but most hand in incomplete work or none at all. "I forgot" ... "I musta left it home" ... "it was here a minute ago. I just can't figure out where it went."

I make a mental note of these lapses, telling myself that a lecture on the importance of these homework assignments must follow at some later date. And, of course, I am relieved to know that no one's grandmother actually died and no one's beloved dog has eaten an unhealthy meal of reduced fractions.

At 9:15 I finally get down to the work of the day. When I knew I would be teaching 4th grade math, I conducted an extensive review of my capabilities, which, though adequate, are not always dependable. After careful study of three textbooks and consultation with another teacher, I have come up with five pages of notes about fractions and how to instruct others in the various mathematic operations to be performed. I have also prepared three handouts: one I'd like to do together in class and the others for homework.

In fact, I am more than a little pleased by this plan. The research is adequate and the handouts are a carefully graduated series of exercises: the first, simple enough for any beginner, and the last, a triumphant arrival at the goal of the lesson. I know exactly how to proceed with each step of my plan.

I place a small amount of each handout on the first desk in each row, and as the children pass them back, I begin the lesson.

"Boys and girls, let's look at the first diagram." I quickly sketch a circle on the board and divide it into six sections. "Each one of these sections represents one sixth of the ..."

"Teachers, we're sorry to interrupt but we have these important late announcements: the Glee Club will not meet in the music room as usual. Instead, Glee Club members should go to Mr. Schulte's

room? that's room 107, next to the cafeteria? and wait for further instruction. Also, boy's soccer practice will be delayed 15 to 20 minutes. Boys should, however, report to the same area outside next to the baseball diamond. Those who have not brought a signed slip from their parents will not be allowed to participate. People who have not turned in their Schroeder candy orders"

The voice goes on and on and on, and each word cranks my tense feelings up a notch. Why can't these things wait until the *end* of the day? Why must they *always* take precedence over instruction? But I realize that isn't a productive attitude. This is just one more lesson to be learned from the subbing experience. Anyway, if I'm going to sub for a professional, I should act like a professional. I realize that I have been clenching my teeth and force myself to relax. It's 9:20 am.

I start over, carefully explaining the necessary concepts, illustrating each one on the board, and encouraging the students to follow along on their handout page. They do seem to be getting the main points of the lesson, yet I am painfully aware that my instruction has not covered even one page of the notes I made for the class.

At 9:30 the door opens and a middle aged woman steps into the room. She wears a long green skirt and matching vest with tiny kittens embroidered all over it. This is Mrs. C—, the resource room teacher. She walks straight past me, as though I were not there, and pauses in front of my desk. Casting a sorrowful gaze over the class, she says mournfully, "Good morning, boys and girls."

Twenty-two pencils clatter as they are dropped from little hands. Twenty-two little voices answer sweetly, in sing-song rhythm, "Good morning, Mrs. C—."

The woman smiles sadly at them. "I'd like to take all of you with me, but today I just need to see Kaitlyn, Jeremy, and Josh Leonard."

There is a rattle of books and papers and sliding of chairs, and the three children come forward.

"Good-bye, children," Mrs. C— says sadly. "Good-bye, Mrs. C—," they chant.

Immediately, there is an outbreak of talking. "How come Kaitlyn gets to go down there instead of doing math?" "She tried to get out of social studies yesterday." "Jeremy left his spelling book here. When Mrs. Everette finds out..." "Mrs. L, can I go take Jeremy's book to him?" "Can I go with him? I know where the room is."

After a few minutes I succeed in settling things down, but a small thread of anxiety has wormed its way into my chest. I realize with sinking spirits that it is anger, possibly even the beginning of fury, and I force it down deeper, away from conscious thought.

Doggedly, I return to the lesson, but almost at once I am interrupted again. The PA system wheezes and whistles and some one, who seems not to understand that a microphone *amplifies* the human voice, shouts "MRS LINCOLN, COULD YOU PLEASE SEND ADAM KOZOKOWSKI TO THE MUSIC ROOM. HIS SPEECH THERAPIST IS WAITING. THANK YOU."

Without a word, Adam collects his books and papers and leaves the room, smirking. "Bye," he says, waving to the other kids. "Bye," they answer. It is 9:45 am.

Once more I return to the lesson, but any hope of completing it has been replaced by a heaviness, as if I had swallowed a piece of lead. Wearily, I begin an explanation of the homework. I will only require them to complete one of the handouts; there isn't time to explain both of them.

"Mrs. Lincoln, I'm so sorry to interrupt you. I have a meeting and I have to leave Raymond here. He will be with you for the next hour." The speaker is Mrs. LeRoy, a small dark-haired woman with a face like a sugar cookie and the voice of an angel. I haven't the energy to be angry with her and couldn't be anyway. Everyone adores her.

Raymond, the student in question, is in a wheelchair; he is

severely retarded and physically handicapped. As part of the inclusion program at this school, Raymond spends most of his school day in regular classrooms, even though the material being taught is beyond his grasp and the regular teachers have no training in his special needs. Mrs. LeRoy positions the wheelchair in a side aisle and explains Raymond's work for the next hour. He has a sheet of paper with three shapes drawn on it: a square, a circle, and a triangle. He also has a crayon with which he is to try to trace over these shapes, staying on the lines as much as he can. This is to be repeated over and over for the entire hour.

Well, I think, that seems simple enough, though why it matters that he do it in my classroom seems difficult to grasp. Apparently, the idea behind inclusion is that the handicapped student will get used to interacting with the regular students, and they will get used to him. Everyone learns valuable people skills to be used in future life.

The error of this theory is immediately revealed to me.

"P-s-s-t! Raymond!"

Raymond drops his crayon and smiles broadly, looking around the room with a hopeful expression.

"Raymond! Show us the beast!"

"Yeah, c'mon, Raymond, do it. Do it for us!"

With a silly grin Raymond lifts his head and makes a guttural growling noise. He shakes his head and holds up his hands in a clutching, claw-like pose.

"Oh look! He's drooling! Gr-r-o-s-s!"

"Do it some more, Raymond!"

Raymond, unaware that he is being mocked and sneered at, obligingly increases his efforts, in spite of my insistence that he stop. This causes an outbreak of laughter and applause, and cries of "Do it, Raymond! C'mon! Show us the beast!"

With difficulty, I manage to settle the class, but only a few minutes later, there is an outbreak of shuffling papers and books and sliding chairs.

"It's only ten minutes to the hour, kids," I say. "There's still time to keep working." But I know my words are in vain. Everyone is out of his seat, milling around, slamming books into backpacks and shuffling papers, chairs and feet.

"Mrs. L, can I leave early? My mother is picking me up from Glee Club and she thinks I'll be at the music room." "This is my homework from last week. Mr. Thomas told me I should give it to you to keep." "I need to leave early because I always go to the office to take my medicine now." "Can I go to the office with Micheal when he takes his medicine?"

Suddenly the bell rings and the chaos shifts to the doorway, where a bottle-neck of struggling students forms briefly and then bursts into the hallway with a deafening roar.

I straighten my notes, realizing as I do so that I have barely gotten through one page of my plan. Numbly, I arrange the handouts for the next class and put away the homework papers that were handed in to me. Already, the room is filling up with students for the next class, along with returning students who have forgotten textbooks, backpacks, and other items. I glance at the clock. It's 10:00 am. I have just completed my first "hour" of teaching.



CURVES
Alissa Nicol



LADY IN SHADOW
Rhonda Schreck

THREE LITTLE WORDS

Catherine Ciaramella-Orsini

ALONE I ENTER THE ROOM. The brass sconces on the wall cast a soft glow on the pale yellow walls creating a calming atmosphere. At the front of the room the polished wood of the casket eerily reflects the soft light. Bewildered, I approach the casket and hesitantly peer in. A gasp escapes my lips as I look on the serene face of my husband. I tell myself that this cannot be happening.

I watch through reddened eyes as our family, friends, and my husband's coworkers file past his casket. "He looks so peaceful"; "I always liked the blue suit." "This is just awful; he was so young"; "Did they have enough insurance?" are whispered in hushed tones but don't escape my ears. Dazed, I greet people, their faces blurring into one another. With sincerity, they all offer their condolences; some offer assistance of any kind in the days or weeks to come. I share a few kind words with most and with others joyful memories I will always treasure.

Clusters of men in dark suits and smaller groups of women in dark dresses grasping each other's hands set a funereal background for the bright yellows, passionate pinks, ruby reds and stately purples of the many floral arrangements that occupy every available table top and floor space. The soothing fragrances of roses, carnations and hyacinths are lost amidst the overpowering essences of Old Spice, Brut and Chanel No.5. Young children, dressed in their Sunday best, sit quietly not knowing exactly what has happened but somehow knowing this is a solemn occasion.

Lost in my own world, I am brought back to reality by a gentle touch on my shoulder. Our parish priest greets me warmly, as if we are old friends, offering his condolences. I feel like a hypocrite. When was the last time we attended church with the exception of the occasional weddings, funerals and the yearly Christmas celebration? People seat themselves while Father eulogizes my husband before beginning the Catholic tradition of praying the rosary. Mindlessly, I finger the beads and repeat the prayers while my thoughts race

through the last days of our lives together.

I remember the harsh words, the profane gestures, the slamming door, and squealing tires burning rubber down the pavement. I recall the hateful thoughts, the promises to never forget and the plots of revenge. I replay the frenzied drive to the emergency room where the somber look on the doctor's face told me more than his words ever could. Ironically, the only thing I cannot remember is what we were arguing about.

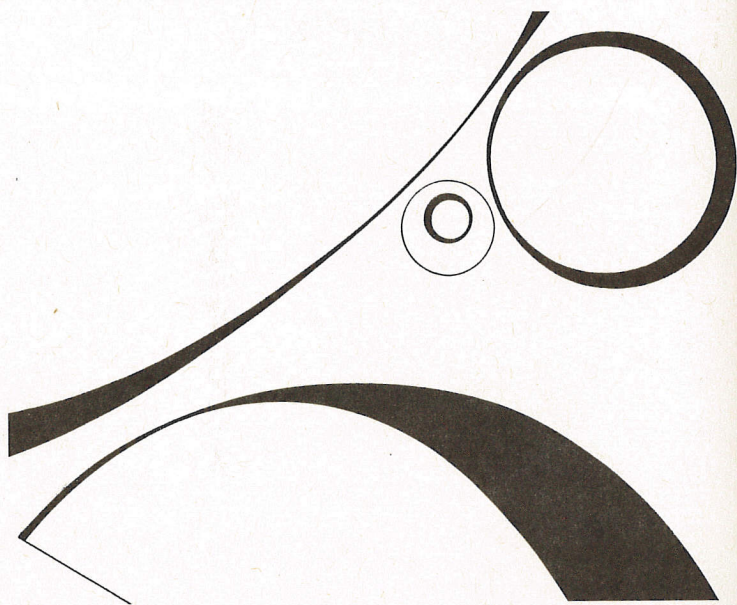
How easy it is to take life and love for granted believing that there will always be tomorrow to make amends, to smooth things over, to say I love you or I was wrong. There is no second chance for us. I am angry. I feel betrayed. "Please, dear Lord," I pray, "I would give anything to relive the last moments of our lives together. I promise to do things differently. Please."

People are leaving now to get on with their lives, which will return to normal with the dawn. Walking slowly around the room, I pause to admire the beautiful flowers and to read each sentimental card. Finished, I stand before my husband and bend down to give him one final kiss. Tears come unhindered, racking my body with violent sobs as I recall our happy moments, the playful signs of affection, and the sharing of dreams for the future which are lost to us now. Bringing me back to reality, a calm solemn voice says, "We need to close the lid on the casket." As the lid closes, I hear the click that will forever separate my soul mate from me.

Sobbing, I scream, "NO!" and bolt up in bed. Damp with sweat, my eyes wet with tears, I feel two strong arms embrace me and the words "Are you okay?" bring relief to my tortured spirit. With tears running down my cheeks, I express how sorry I am and how much I love him. With earnest, he echoes my words and for a few moments we cling to each other in the darkened room. Love is expressed intimately and passionately. Later, as I lay in my husband's arms, his rhythmic breathing lulling me to sleep, the tears return but for a different reason.

The Lord has granted my request, and I will keep my promise.

POETRY



HIP
Alissa Nicol

BROTHER,

I say that mother loved you more.
Your sheening, football-shaped body slid out of her smoothly.
I left bits of blood and mucus and matter all over.
Me, that purple-death-blue and her whiter than this page.
It is you she cries over,
pulling her hair out in long strands that turn silver.
Wringing her hands and calling me about you still.

I say to you that I love you too,
but you are the brother that doesn't touch,
that spark of flesh on flesh too much for memories—
those ugly black words that flew from
foam specked lips into the air
and dropped, rooting in soil.

I say to you that you are beautiful,
your eyes shine like pieces of glass rubbed clean and green
from the sea.

Your hands straight and strong, like father's.
We argue poetry over baseball,
wine and cheese versus beer and chips,
seeking to give it another chance,

same as the deep-rooted trees our old yard had,
before you and I went out,
hatchet and hammer and clippers in hand,
tossing, burning, chopping, trimming, clipping.
Clean skeleton limbs jutting into the space
you and I tried to make.

Heather Herrmann-Miller

W H A T?

The old timers stand very near when they talk—
They put a hand on your shoulder and you watch the lines in
their face work
Leaning and tilting their heads so words have a direct path into
your ear
You smell Pall Malls, coffee and soap, or the lack of it.

At first it makes you uneasy and you want to turn away
Why are they so close?
You want to step back to escape their breath and have your own space
But they follow.

Then you work near it, the place they've been—
Number six paper machine's winder
A fighter plane sounding machine, screaming, whining
Yelling paper at the top of its lungs into nice, tight rolls.

It hammers the ancient brick and metal building,
Vibrating dust and clotted grease until it all floats into
breathable bits
Hand signals have been created from necessity among the crews
And bent visitors pass as if fighting a head wind of sound.

Four guys on number six—four guys on its neighbor, number five
Sixteen ears slowly eaten away like moths in the trees
Until grandchildren's voices become rounded and dull
And you stare at small mouths to decipher shapeless mumblings.

Every fiscal period or so they come and test us—
Hard-head phones that don't fit in a moldy mobile testing center
Put your hand in the air at the sound OF A BEEP
Of A Beep
of a beep

After, the Industrial Health Care Nurse asks: Do you hunt
with a gun?

Hmm, she says, well that must be the problem

Have you ever had an ear infection?

Hmm, her pen scribbles on the clipboard, well, that must be the
problem.

You realize you've been duped and documented

They're here for him, the guy upstairs sharpening his pencil, not you

Proof against in case of future action

Whether it be legal or some other.

You know it could be fixed

No other winder causes such a stir It could be fixed

We have engineers with degrees and hard hats It could be fixed

New parts and yes, some money but It could be fixed.

But where would it show for the bosses in offices we've
only imagined?

No pie chart or bar graph at the end of a conference table
would highlight it

No quarterly earnings report would boast of it

It would be an orphaned feather in search of a cap.

Old timers stand very near when they talk—

You put a hand on their shoulder to draw them in

The scent of Pall Malls mixing with your own breath

A voice directed into your ear, close and comforting.

Tyler Hill

MIDNIGHT'S TO HOME

When your relief walks in you want to kiss him
take his sleepy unhappy face in your hands
and lay your own hot sweaty mouth firmly on his

Grab your bag of clothes, books, magazines, food,
whatever got you through the night
stroll out the short industrial-blue hallway and
submerge into a baptism of sweet morning air.

Walking away from whining churning buzzing ringing flashing
all of it rolling off your back with distance
Then into your dew laden car and silence
empty full consuming lovely silence

Drive four short blocks
and round the curve to the river
blue even without light
playfully bending the reflection of the bridge above

Beyond is a cruise too early for stoplights to care
so they blink you through with a yawning yellow eye
cool air diddles an elbow hung out the window
and a cigarette dangles to celebrate

You pass Huron Tool and Die
its big door open with machinery exposed
a gaped mouth full of teeth

cars pass the other way and you smile
they're going in
You're going out

You slide around the final corners
into a drive way with home gravel crunching
swing the door open and listen to birds waking
a key to the lock
then an arched back cat circles your shoes while you untie
and says, "hey, what's up? I missed ya."

Tyler Hill



VIM
Kristin Wolford

FOR MACGYVER

For laying pinned up on my wall
that year I was thirteen—
all thirty by sixty centimeters of you
looking over me as I slept, twisted, and turned
and learned what growing warm under
thin blankets during a thick summer evening
was really all about.

Those Monday nights from 8-9 when you'd
flick across my suburbia television—
your hands twisting together pop cans
and melted chocolate,
winding thread and wax and wire
and saving the day with those slender brown fingers
that I wanted making peace and settling the wars
inside of me.

The crinkle along the edge of your
sludge-brown eyes that thick syrup
projected through screen, time, and air
sloshed over my skin,
mud pies, swirls.

That first man who quickened my pulse,
shortened my breath,
and sent fires he couldn't put out
racing through my belly and thighs.

Heather Herrmann-Miller

GREASE

I use ta see Grease comin' round the corner from Freddy's Bar,
arms rockin' like stop lights in a hurricane and
two telephone poles in a match race for legs,
the man stepped out like he owned the street.

'Cept every one knew Grease didn't own nothin',
one look would tell he was a no where and
if you bumped up against him he'd stain ya,
that's how he got his name.

Grease was made for Freddy's Bar,
he stank like a bar rag at the end of a night and
Freddy's was a dive that pretended to be nothin else,
if you seen one you seen the other.

Grease was pretty harmless but he didn't look it,
people seeing him first time got outta his way
but, like it was owed he'd stop'em to ask for change,
most times they'd give it up.

Folks who knew him would just laugh,
"Get yourself a job, Grease. You ain't nothin but lazy" but
he'd just walk his walk and yell back through busted teeth,
"I don't need you, I get my beer money somewhere's else".

Most nights Grease end up sleeping in Freddy's back alley,
a box for blanket and his beer buzz keep him warm but
he sometimes wake up with a rat on him.

Somebody ask him once why he's like that,
he drop his head ta smile at broken sidewalk chunks and
said, "Cause I am,"
like it was a stupid question.

Last day Grease wasn't walkin the walk,
his telephone poles seemed to bend wrong and
he was sweaten like a whore workin corners in August,
but he made it into Freddy's.

Grease ordered one beer then fell off the stool,
everybody jump up like they do when there's a fight but
nobody did nothin 'cept the bartender who dial 911,
ain't nobody wanted ta touch him.

He lay twitchin on crusty tiles,
open mouth losers standin round watchin while
his legs jerked like they wanted ta step out on their own,
but they died too.

After he died everybody like him more,
talkin bout his walkin step and
how he never complain bout nothin,
I guess they forget about his smell.

Tyler Hill

IRRATIONAL NUMBERS AND DREAMS

What do they sound like?

They sound like a man on a bench in a busy city who is speaking words with no meaning. His lips are working: up, down. Spit is flying along with his hands and he sings. You are watching his mouth, his hands. You hear a horn, a vender, a child, the whir of a bike pedal, screech of tire, twitter of pigeon; but you cannot hear him—the man with opened palms, and then he is gone and you rub your eyes but it was much more than a dream and everyone you tell is too scared to believe.

What does he look like?

Who, the man on the bench?

No, the one who explains about numbers and dreams.

Like a gallon of milk. Like a paper doll with eyes X-ed out. Like a magazine ad for light blue suits. Someone stole his hands and replaced them with the soft fingers and dirty nails of the man on the bench. His mouth is sculpted bubble gum, his eyelids are butterflies' wings, his hair is straw, rope, yarn stolen from a grandmother's basket to make a puppet.

How does he smell?

Like evergreen trees and baseball leather.

How is his voice?

A storyteller. A glassmaker. Someone balancing bubbles of soap on his fingertips and tongue, careful, so they don't break.

Who are you without him?

A bag of broken glass. Glass that cuts open a finger or toe when you drive past a pine tree or hold a baseball up to your nose. A raging nymphomaniac. Someone who eats jellybeans one by one. A preserver of dead bugs. Someone who collects stones in jars and paper dolls in folders and never flips through a catalogue. Someone who smells of sunshine and street-vendor-almonds. Someone who picks the skin of men out from underneath her fingernails. A girl who grows a garden but gives away the vegetables. A woman who howls at the moon.

Heather Herrmann-Miller



SANIBEL: PEOPLE AND BIRDS

Heather Herrmann-Miller

MANILA,

We're conjoined.
Our first meeting, yet you were familiar.
Among your masses I recognize
My nose, my hair, my skin, my feet
Everywhere.

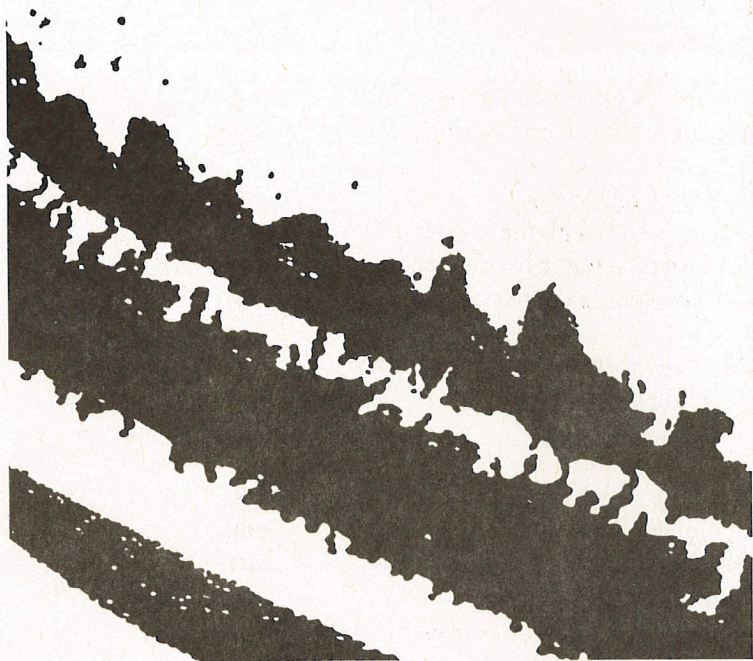
Like shells on the beach
Swindlers scatter your streets,
To talk us out of our American bucks.

Boys in Bulls jerseys
Play slapjack with the "Kano".
Then return to the barefoot chase
Of chickens and emaciated dogs.

Men on street corners, shirts flipped up
Cooling brown bellies
As Dad had done.

Like the Pacific
I, too, live between
The American and Filipino shores.
And now with certainty I know.
Your sand is the substance of my bones.

Laura Breidenich



DISTORTED CLIP

Stacey Kemp

NARCISSISTIC PERSONALITY DISORDER

So maybe we all act as if
we've been molested, huh?
That tightly pulled back hair,
thick and shiny with gel,
smears of gold and silver
above our slits of eyes,
tits out to here and
bat, buckle, sway; tongue over teeth.

We paint our bodies with ink
and powder in ceramic pots.
The man doesn't matter,
that he's a man does.
She goes for the one in pinstripe,
I the one in black,
you the one in the maroon tie.
The eyebrow ring in his face hooks me in
and over I prance.
Lit cigarette,
circle of ash,
silver hair, silver money clip,
silver in his teeth
when his mouth opens wide.

Consuming, sucking, piercing,
voracious gnawing
into those mounds of flesh
both hard and soft
and young and old
and wet and dried,
and finally; stained.

Heather Herrmann-Miller

PICNIC

You say I'm no picnic
but I'm cool and easy
under the shade of a thousand trees
that seek to quell this skin that prickles
and is on fire,
this jutting and curving wave
winding through a railroad of synapses,
flashing your name and everyone else's,
words misread and labeled.

Like the time you said your heart
was like a tomato, ripe,
and then I came along and squeezed
you through fleshy red bits of your seed
slipping over my skin,
between my fingers and teeth.

No picnic but I'll lay in the sun
with you anytime, sipping from
a bag with cheap red wine,
watch the sky lose its color
and find it again in you and me,
in rain that turns blue,
on this blanket we are
spread on called earth:

as you lift things to my mouth
and I suck sweetness
from your fingers,
salt, satiation,
and grass grows throughout us,
between fingers and toes.

Us with daisies for eyes
and leaves for loins and
this wind-our breath.

Heather Herrmann-Miller



UNUSUAL
Jennifer Studaker

STOPPING BY SOCKS ON A LONELY EVENING

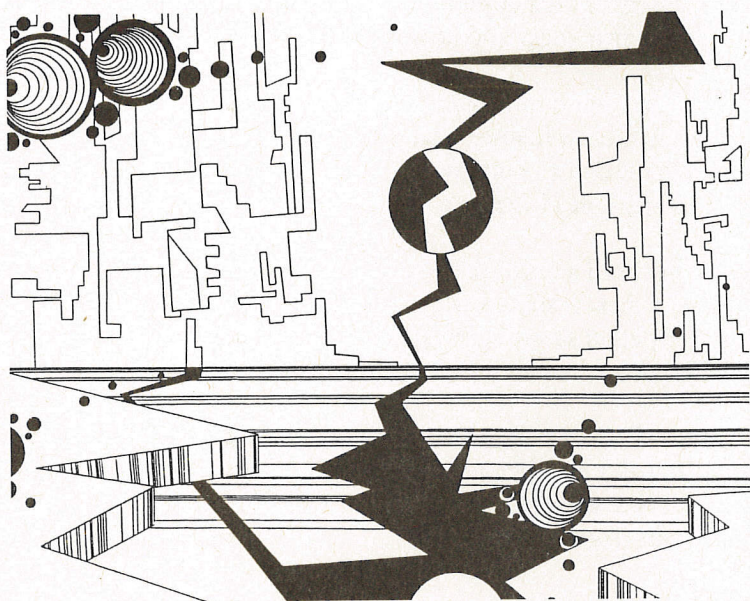
Whose socks these are, I think I know.
The smell could reach the village, though;
He will not see me stopping here
To gather dirty socks and underwear.

My judging mind must think it queer
To toss without a hamper near
Between the bed an outer wall
The highest pile of the year.

I give my head a little shake
To ask if there is some mistake
The only other sound's my sigh
As they're washed with suds of downy flake.

These socks are lovely, pure and clean,
But I'm still knee-deep in laundering.
And piles to go before I sleep,
And piles to go before I sleep.

Bonnie Lee Dunn



DOWNTOWN
Alexander Furchak

VIA DOLOROSA

Down the Via Dolorosa, called the way of suffering
You did more than promise, You died for me.
Every step brought more pain, every gasp
quickenened the flow of blood,
but You walked, carrying on Your back, death,
thorns from my corruption tore Your skin.
The screams of hate echoing in Your ears,
shadowed Your suffering to the end,
and You let go of Your Spirit
with me on Your mind.

Sara Achatz

SOUTH

Exploding points of cherry-red
roll along these maps of veins
that take a traveler from tip of my nose
to outstretched fingers, spread toes,
belly and thighs.

You walk across cracked pavement at me,
open your palms—your arms and body a South Carolina oak.
I am Spanish moss,
clinging to the outsides of you,
growing and curling along your skin,
wedging into you.

I explode like crepe myrtle in ninety degrees
of your turned eyes,
pieces of glass smooth and shiny
from waves and salt and you and me
and you and others.

My moon flower opens.
Full, white, round.

You are heat lightning
exploding pink and orange
above my ocean.

You are silver rain in the morning,
after a velvet evening holds
a fat magnolia moon.

I am folded inside.
I am Azaleas,
Angels Trumpet,
Mimosa.

You—
Hibiscus and
wild sea oats.

Sometimes I forget the color
of your eyes until the sky dims
and you come to me in dreams,
wicked vine,
wrapping and warping
my sand and skin and salt
and leaving me beating,
bursting, blooming, rootless,
waiting to sink deep into your soil,

flowering weed that springs
through cracked blacktop,
littered with glass, paper, the occasional
cigarette butt.

I am the ground beneath your passerby shoe.

Heather Herrmann-Miller



SHELL FAR AWAY

Anthony Gonder

THE UNDEAD OF WINTER

The other day, I saw this girl dancing at the bus stop.
Whispering and whipping up her long black curls.
Snowflakes flying around her—
Yeah, she was dancing.
Arms whispering and whipping around her,
Lavender coat on the ground beside her,
Legs and head shaking next to snowy piles.
Dancing on a patch of salted sidewalk,
It seemed as if, in the moments before I saw her,
She had crouched down,
Cupped her mittened hands,
And cleared away that snow.
Laid her cheek on that doorway patch,
And listened to the pulsing, concentrated form of life below.
Life that shifts and stirs,
In cramped up coffee-cream swirls of energy.
It waits for cold and gray to slide away,
So it can slip out and get sipped up into dormant buds,
Push out into green leaves,
And swell into peach petals:
Peach petals like the cheeks of that girl.

Yvonne LeTourneau

WHAT I WANT

This is what I want you to see—
peeled back epidermal layers,
scaly, dried, sunburned skin coming off in strips
like a reptile,

I want you to see me shed my scales.

This moonflower-white,
coffee-grinds black,
maize-yellow,
alien green girl.

This is what I want you to see—
sinewy muscle deep velvet,
groaning at the disposal of first layer,
an easing of flesh bound from muscle,
a pool of skin over that silk black robe—
me red and thriving inside.

This is what I want you to see—
my moonflower-womb,
Spanish moss capillaries and veins.
I want you to see the violets that fill my lungs,
the daisies that are pasted in the sockets of my eyes,
hot blood surging throughout
until it reaches that deep space,
the black orb slightly to the left—
this is what I want you to see.

This is what I want you to see—
clean bones, shining white in moonlight,
a pool of flesh over skin and satin.
The metallic glint in a tooth,
the chipped porcelain pieces of my right ankle,
the spread of my hips,
Whelk shells curved at you.

I want you to see my bones and ashes
sinking to the bottom of the lake,
fish eating, being filled on my body.
I want you to come along,
hook those fish and reel them in, fried up—
scales, skin, eyes, bones and see if you can get full;
see if you can ever be full of me.
This is what I want: you insatiable.

Heather Herrmann-Miller

W W H D

Sitting on a lacquered wooden chair
behind a scarred blue control panel
paper spinning before me at 4,000 ft per
I read Hemingway

He sits at a small table by a Spanish river estuary
looking at shining white houses
in the blue shadows of a mountain

Most times I can hold the vision,
taste the absinthe being warmed by his hand
sway in the breeze that ruffles the white table cloth and
strokes his lover's hair

Normally he is my escape, he lets me follow;
tracking a bull elephant through tall grasses in Africa
creeping forays in the cold mud of European battlefields
drinking at outdoor cafes and learning the streets of Paris
listening to the line sing with the strain of a Marlin off the
coast of Cuba

But my imagination has gotten tired
and the idea of walking suddenly tastes so fine
that I get drunk on its promise
to walk, for real
walk out

Walk to the edge of something
to a different continent
to a place where I understand no-one
where air smells and breathes differently, to me
and the sunlight feels backward, on me

That day, I had a conversation with him
he'd finished with his morning's writing
and walked up beside me, right here
He set down his glass on the edge of the winder,
looked over the whole place as if he had bad wine in his mouth
and said "What the hell's the matter with you?"

Then the reel ran out
and the paper cracked off the spool
And there was no Ernest, just me
holding a book.

Tyler Hill

PIZZA GIRL BLUES

I drive pizzas.
To hungry folks in the sticks,
To the folks in insta-home parks,
And Bouge folks that think they rich,
I got a '99 Escort,
I make payments on it,
By way of minimum wage,
And pizza girl tips,
This gig is low stress,
Not much room to bitch,
But there's a couple few things,
That dig under my skin,
Like:
House numbers,
Blurred,
By foliage or fog;
Some folks aint got numbers 'atall,
Lucky for them folks their neighbors do,
 'Else I would get to eat their food,
And Sir,
I'm inclined to stay in my car
Until you lock up that Rottweiler Dog,
He's steamin my window,
Three foot tall, all teeth,
And I bet pizza girls are his favorite treat,
And I would like a word with that road commission,
These country roads I drive are in piss poor condition,
There's a pothole on Fargo that will swallow your car,
And a quick trip down Rynn Road will shake it apart,
And the insta-home folks,
Who make me stand in the cold,
While they're hiding their dope,
They come to the door all-stinking of smoke,

Tip me a dollar,
Don't even offer a toke,
I'd like to tell them,

“Save your quarters, just give me a roach!”
But there is only one thing that gets me pissed,
That is,
Of course,
When I get stiffed.
The Bouge folks are the worst,
Them and their kids,
Lexus in the drive but can't afford a tip.
You'd think all that money would make them smart, or some shit,
Bitch, I've seen your face,
And I know where you live,
What if you found your lawn jockey,
Strung up in a tree.
By a Christmas light noose,
You'd blame your neighbors, not me,
And all the while,
A dollar,
Would have saved you the grief,
Maybe that would teach you not to fuck with the tipped employees,
But I will say this,
Most folks are *all right*,
I make \$20 bucks an hour,
On a Saturday night,
No health,
No dental,
But I can come to work fried,
Burn with the boss every night,
He aint gonna mind,
What's that you say,
My boss and me should be locked away?

That we deserve your disrespect,
For all our evil ways,
You'll never build jails big enough,
For all of us, man,
Besides, without us,
Just who would you have
 to wipe your ass,
 to bus your tables,
 to pump your gas?
 to bring you hot fresh food?
While you sit at home drinkin' booze,
'Cause it's legal for you to do,
It aint no wonder why
I got the pizza girl blues,
I'm living on the trickle down,
From folks like you.

Barbara Wiseman



DEVOTION
Kristin Wolford

3RD PLACE ART 103

FRIENDS OF THE ARTS

FRIENDS OF THE ARTS IS AN ORGANIZATION of citizens of our community who are interested in supporting the arts and promoting programs at St. Clair County Community College in music, theatre, creative writing and the visual arts.

Currently the organization is co-chaired by Nancy Nyitray and Geri Reed. Other board members are: Sylvia Bargiel, Susanna Defever, David Korff, Al Matthews and Margaret Stone.

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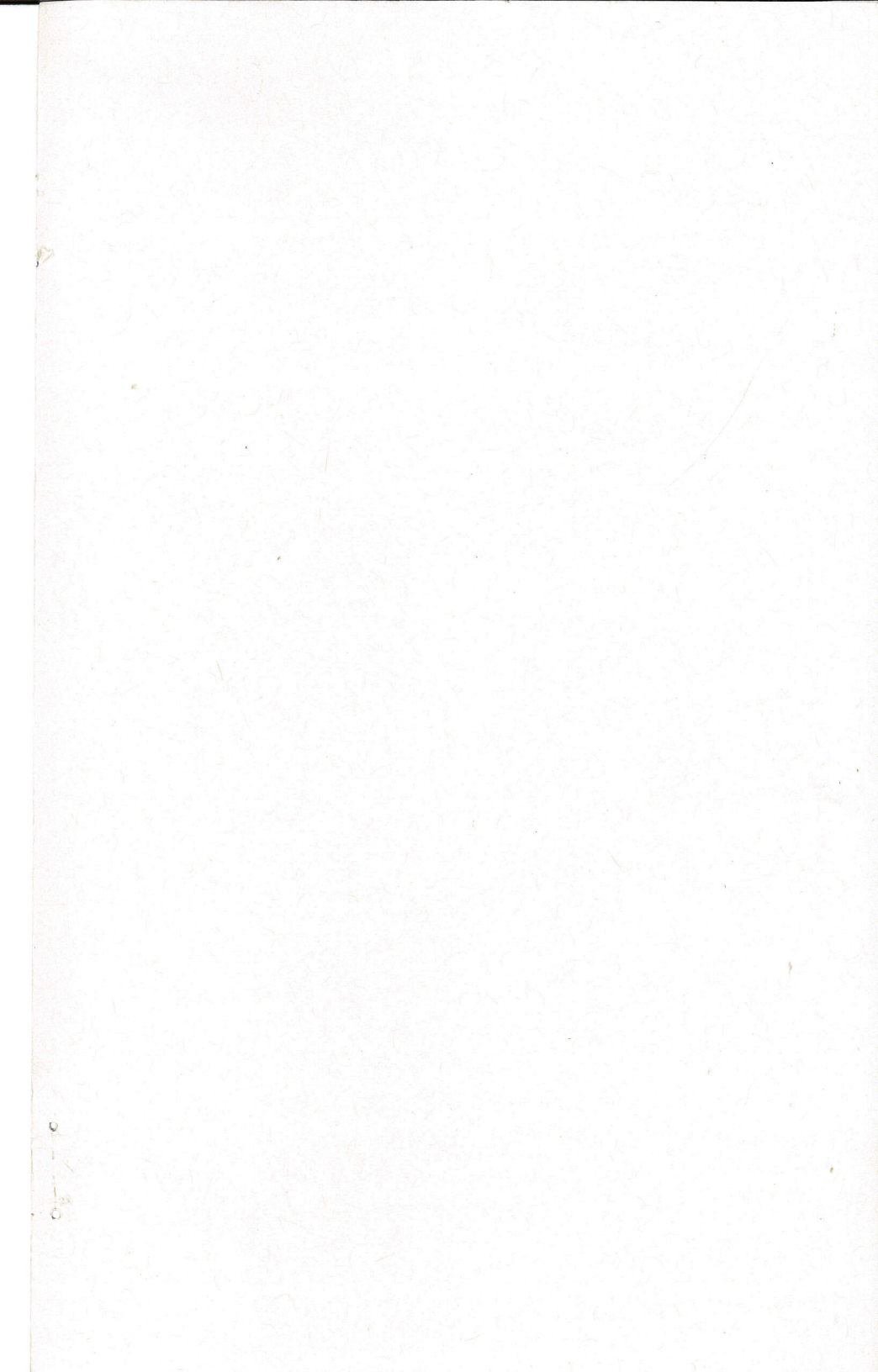
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The text face is Apga Monotype digital Poliphilus and its' italic companion Apga Monotype digital Blado. Francesco Griffo originally designed Poliphilus for the printer Aldus Manutius in 1499. Adobe Pagemaker software used to compose this book on a Macintosh computer was first named Aldus Pagemaker after the famous printer. Ludovico degli Arrighi, an Italian calligrapher, designed Blado about 1526.

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